
S E R M O N S

ON THE

CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

[*Price, in Boards, 7s. 6d.*]



SERMONS
ON THE
CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

BY JOHN MARTIN.

16

I WILL SPEAK OF THE GLORIOUS HONOUR OF THY
MAJESTY, AND OF THY WONDROUS WORKS.

PSALM cxlv. 5.

L O N D O N:

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1793.

STIMONS

OF THE

CHARACTER OF CHURCH



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DEDICATION.

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, MEETING
IN GRAFTON-STREET, SOHO.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IT was with great tenderness that our Lord said these words to his select associates. Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations. By thus commending their fidelity and perseverance, he hath taught his ministers, not merely to applaud, but to follow his example. Between him and us the disparity indeed, is very conspicuous; but remote analogies, on such a subject, are always lawful, generally pleasing to real Christians, and sometimes beneficial.

When I came to London, to be your stated minister, my temptations were many,

and my trials somewhat severe ; at least they were so in my own apprehension.

In those days, my friends, who were not in communion with us, were much alarmed at my situation, when they saw, so soon after my settlement, seventy-three persons separate themselves from me, with the usual tempers which the discontented indulge.

Of the conflicts which I then endured, several of you were more than witnesses. Your zeal and friendship, your faith and patience, were severely tried : yet you were not hurt, but instructed, by that unpleasant dispensation. Be assured, your Christian kindness to me and mine, during those painful moments, is not forgotten. I often think of it with secret satisfaction ; and, as long as I remember any proof of human friendship, your concern for me, and patience with me, will probably live in my remembrance.

Though by the issue of those conflicts, which I thus recal to your minds, and by those

those instances of mortality, every where to be expected, more than two hundred members have been taken from us, since the year 1773, yet, as a church, we never were more numerous; never in greater tranquillity: never apparently, were you more contented with your pastor; never had he better reasons to be contented in the discharge of his pastoral duty.

After serving you constantly, almost twenty years, what I have said cannot be considered as a mere compliment. But, by the grace of God, you are what you are: and, though much is yet wanting, and some things amiss amongst us, we may still expect from that grace, to find help in every time of need.

I now present you, in the decline of my life, with a volume of sermons; in which, when I am dead, I may perhaps, speak to you and yours; and while I am living, I flatter myself, though some may not, that *you* will read them without regret.

Of these sermons, and of their being published at this time, I feel myself disposed to give you a short and an ingenuous account.

On the leading *subject* of them little need be said. It speaks for itself. You, at least, will be of that opinion. For, whatever some may think of the character of Christ, in your estimation it must be glorious ; since you believe that Christ is your life, and that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. A subject therefore, that would be more acceptable to you, it was not in my power to choose ; and one better worth the notice of Christians at large, it is not easy, if it be possible, to select.

As to the *form* in which this work appears, that, it must be owned, is not so pleasing. To sermonize in print, is to run the hazard of being thought a dull writer. In what is commonly called *good company*, this is, I believe, the current opinion. A single sermon, if it is well studied, and well pronounced,
may

may be heard with pleasure, but a volume of sermons is seldom read, I fear, with tolerable satisfaction.

When I undertook this work, I had no doubt an elegant display of the virtues of Christ might excite applause ; no doubt that a well written history of his life might be approved ; but whether this set of sermons would better suit the taste even of *some* serious readers, than those many volumes which they have thought proper to reject, I could not foresee. Nevertheless, as a preacher, I still preferred this form of composition.— Why I was so partial to it shall not be concealed.

Every man, I thought, owed something to his own reputable profession ; and that it became me in mine, to seek its credit ; at least to make it manifest I was not ashamed of my calling.

Further ; I had, as you know, preached a course of lectures on the character of Christ,
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at Grafton-street, in the year 1782; therefore when I resolved to publish a volume in octavo, on subjects peculiar to revealed religion, the substance of those lectures was preferred to any other manuscript in my possession.

Let me add, that I was also disposed to preserve the original form of those lectures, because I knew it had pleased God to impart the best of blessings to mankind by the ministry of his word; and because I believed, that if sermons from the pulpit and the press, were now held in little account, the fault was not to be charged on that mode of instruction, but on the mismanagement of those preachers whose sentiments, diction, address, or personal imprudence, are not calculated to excite esteem.

In short, I was willing to conclude, that if I ventured to write on the character of Christ, it would better become *me* to do it in a series of sermons, than in any other form.

Of

Of the *manner* in which I have written these discourses I cannot boast. Had I taken more time, or read some things which have lately fallen into my hands, they would have been better finished. You must' now take them as they are. That I have bestowed some pains to make them worth your notice, you will admit. That I have laboured under many disadvantages, it is now in vain to lament.

- If I succeed in this performance, it will give me the greater satisfaction, as it will be, or I am deceived, the success of revelation, and not the triumph of my own invention. If I fail, it must be imputed to my want of judgment; at least I am not conscious it originated from any vicious design. I may have misinterpreted, or misapplied, some passages of scripture, but I am not convinced of having perverted a single text.

In reference to those *motives* which induced me to publish these discourses, as I only am
able

able to say what they were, the little I have to say of them shall be told with veracity.

It hath been for some time my wish to be thus employed, to refresh my own mind with facts of the greatest importance; and, of late, this wish hath been the more ardent, from reflections on some of my former publications, by which I have been too much diverted from such facts, in a manner I need not here explain. It may be sufficient to say, that he who writes for the press, is not always at full liberty to write on what is most agreeable to his own taste. His attention is often turned to things, not the most pleasing to himself, either as an author, or as a man. Our works, whether they are wise, or foolish, are in the hands of God. However, God hath not yet permitted me, at any time, to publish a single page which I suspected to be erroneous, or thought to be unfair, when it went out of my hands. But who is so happy always to write in such a manner as, on subsequent reflection, he thoroughly approves.

HAVING

HAVING said these things, I have not much to add. But as these sermons are published by subscription, it may perhaps be asked, Why are not the subscribers names printed? The truth is, as some of them desired to be *anonymous*, as none of them could be supposed to take it *ill* that their names were not published by *me*, and, as I thought others who had shewn me favour might not approve of some pages in this performance, it seemed best to keep the list of my subscribers in my own possession.

Before I conclude, permit me to say a few words of that assistance which I have received from other authors.

Bishop Atterbury, it seems, often asserted, that there never was a good writer who had not the art of transplanting into his own writings the beauties of his predecessors; and that the man who imitated nobody, would probably find no imitators. Convinced of the truth, and good sense of these assertions, I have availed myself freely, not only of the
words

words of inspiration, but of the sentiments of persons uninspired, of different communities, abilities, and tastes. Nor will you blame me for this, should you be of opinion, that I have not introduced into these discourses, now they are printed, any thing which is unnecessary, or unprofitable, or which gives a vicious turn to any part of the sacred scriptures.

If what I have quoted, and translated, from other authors, seems not to be introduced with all that verbal precision, and with all those marks of borrowing which modern custom requires, this has happened, because I have leaned more to that art which **ATTERBURY** applauded, than to that custom which requires no art at all.

But to another custom, which was carried to great excess in the last century, and which is still, in my opinion, too much esteemed, I have paid more attention than I am able to defend. I mean the custom of dividing and subdividing a sermon, by roman and arithmetical

arithmetical figures, into so many distinct parts, and subordinate sections. Order is essential to good composition ; but order rarely requires the aid of such figures to make it-self visible.

I conclude this address with intreating the continuance of your prayers, and your perseverance in those offices of friendship, which it may be your duty to perform, and for my felicity to accept.

I am, my dear friends,

Your's in our Lord,

JOHN MARTIN.

Oxford-street, No. 432,

March 15th, 1793.

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S E R M O N I.

ON THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST.

ACTS x. 43.

TO HIM GIVE ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS.

INTENDING to lay before you in these Lectures, some thoughts on the character of Christ, in a series of Sermons selected for that purpose, I have chosen the words of Peter to Cornelius as my leading text.

It will not agree with my purpose to paraphrase what the Apostle said to the Centurion, nor to detain you by common-place remarks on *Prophecy*, or by saying to how many different notions that unsettled term hath been applied. It is sufficient to note, that to prophecy, is to bear witness of Christ. So much may be inferred from our text. But, before

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2 ON THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST.

we consider wherein the *force* of the prophetic testimony consists, it may not be improper to glance at the supposed *necessity* of such witnesses to the Character of Jesus Christ.

On this subject, we may observe, that if the prophets had not borne witness of him, the world, for four thousand years, must have been entirely ignorant of the only mediator between God and man: and, indeed, were we ourselves to reject their testimony, we should find our acquaintance with Christ would be on the decline, and our zeal for his interest would be very much abated.

Further; the importance of our Lord's Character is such, that it requires, and ever did require, the best external evidence. But better evidence of the truth and excellence of the Character of Christ, than the prophets have given, we cannot soberly expect. Their testimony may be misunderstood; but it cannot be contradicted. It may be confirmed by historical narration, but the Evangelists, who wrote the Life of Christ, have referred us to the

the antient prophets as the root of religious information. For it is clear, that neither the Evangelists, nor the Apostles, said any other things of Christ, than those which the prophets did say should come.

Once more ; the necessity of such witnesses to the Character of Christ, may be inferred from the nature and design of Christianity. Inferior evidence of it, would not be thought sufficient ; greater, would not agree with those ends which are to be answered by the Christian religion. By it, the prophets assure us, the lofty looks of men were to be humbled, the haughtiness of men to be bowed down, and the Lord alone exalted : by it the tempers of men were to be thoroughly tried, and the hearts both of the mighty, and of the mean, exquisitely searched. There must, then, in the *original* testimonies of Christ (on which all additional evidence of him *depends*) be light enough to direct the honest, cautious believer ; but not enough to gratify them who are indolent, and perverse. The vail must be rent ; but perfect light within the vail, we

4 ON THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST.

are not here permitted to expect. The lamp of prophecy still shineth in a dark place ; it is sufficiently strong for the wayfaring man ; but he who asks not his way to Zion, with his face thitherward, may expect perplexity in his crooked paths ; and, at the close of his irregular proceedings, awful disappointments.

By the aid of prophecy, the believer seems to live in all ages. By what the prophets have said, he learns what was done before the world began ; and, in their pages, reads of the most antient settlements of grace, rejoicing. The creation, the fall of man, the first discovery of Christ, and the following revelations of him, prior to his Incarnation, pass under his review ; and, when the Word is made flesh, and dwells amongst us, he beholds his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ; nor does he lose sight of this object while on earth, in the grave, on, or even after his resurrection. By the same light he perceives what was done at and since the day of Pentecost ; and likewise what may yet be expected in approaching revolutions. But
then,

then, he sees all this through a glass darkly. Obscurity is blended with his brightest prospects ; nor can he, in any of them, rise above analogy. Yet is the believer guided by unerring information, and will soon pass from resemblance to perfect reality. For, when Christ, who is his life, shall appear, then shall he also appear with him in glory.

More might be added on this subject ; but, the single proposition, on which I mean to dwell in this discourse, is, the *force* of that witness which the prophets have given us, of the Character and Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

This force, lies not in detached assertions ; but in that body of evidence which they exhibit. Some of their depositions, separately considered, may seem to be of little moment ; but, taken all together, what they have asserted is, to an ingenuous mind, invincible. In the most venerable countenance, there is usually some feature not so attracting as the rest : yet the combined effect of the whole, every heart hath felt, and every tongue ap-

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plauded. Or, if there be any exceptions, they are so few in number, and owing to causes so unpleasant, as not to affect public opinion.

Let us now consider some of those articles separately, which, when summed up, will make no small amount ; and which may convince us, that the *force* of the prophetic testimony, cannot be greater than it is, to agree with the nature and design of Christianity.

First, then, let it be recollected, that, as witnesses, the prophets did not appear as private men ; but came forth, and spoke in the name of God, as they were moved by the holy Spirit. If they were not thus inspired, who can account for their accurate and numerous predictions of Jesus Christ ? But, if that fact is admitted, how much do those witnesses merit our attention ? and, how illustrious must he be, to whom *all* the prophets have given witness !

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord : and

the prophets continually speak of themselves as the servants of the living God. It is but fair, then, to try them on their own pretensions, till it can be proved, they were deceived, or, that they deceived others. Tried on this principle, they must ever be victorious; and, if judged of by any other, such unfair dealing would merit no reply.

Secondly; the antiquity of prophecy must be of weight with every man who admits the authenticity of the word of God. For there we are told, that in the cool of that very day, in which sin made its first appearance amongst us, Adam both heard and received the leading prediction of Jesus Christ. What he heard, believed, and rejoiced in, he taught his children. He could not withhold from them the best news he heard in Paradise; nor could the unbelief of Cain prevent either the faith or obedience of his younger brother. No; Abel resisted unto blood; and, though dead, he yet speaketh. Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, believed in Christ, and prophecied of him. In his prophetic visions, he saw not

only the first, but the second coming of our Lord. Behold, said Enoch, the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints. Long, therefore, before Moses, long before Noah's flood, infallible predictions of Christ abounded; and those of such a nature, as never to be revoked.

Antiquity, I own it, has often been urged improperly; and to answer purposes which good men cannot approve. But when the subject is fairly introduced; when the antiquity on which the argument turns, is as remote as possible, and in point; when it is also of that kind which invites examination, and is made subservient to no purpose but that of grace and truth, they who do not revere it, however they may be caressed, can never be respectable for their religious opinions.

In vain are some disposed to say, We are the antients; not those who lived before us. In vain is this sophistical notion puffed off to men of understanding. Nothing, however, on religious subjects, better guards us against
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such extravagance, than distinct, and enlarged views, of that chain of truths, and events, which is set before us in the word of God. To suppose, that any link in that chain is unconnected with the rest, is a groundless opinion. To call the first link of it the last, or, the last, the first, is a strange impropriety of speech ; and, to expect any of the blessings of Christianity, out of that connection which the Almighty approves, is infatuation.

In the third place ; the continuance of the prophetic witnesses, through so many ages ; most of them under great oppressions ; all of them having strong temptations to hold their peace ; this is a fact we cannot contradict ; nor can we account for it, but by adverting to the purpose, power, and providence of God.

Sometimes, indeed, the visions of the prophets were withdrawn, and the word of the Lord withheld from them. In those affecting periods, the eyes of the Seers, saw no more than those of other men ; nor could they deliver what they had not received. In truth,
there

there never was any period when the prophets could see, or say, what they pleased. Their message, the moment they were to deliver it, and even the manner in which it was to be expressed, (whether to many, few, or to one alone;) were not under their own direction. Yet, under all these restrictions, a competent number of these witnesses was raised up, and prophesied of Christ, from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to Malachi. After Malachi, the spirit of prophecy was restrained four hundred years; when, on a sudden, it was again poured out, in a very remarkable manner.

This event merits the greater attention, as it had been repeatedly foretold. Isaiah had said, The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord : make straight in the desert an highway for our God. Joel too, in the name of Jehovah, had said, and it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons, and your daughters, shall

shall prophecy. Malachi, likewise, speaking of the same period, foretold, that the New Testament Elijah would make his appearance, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. These predictions were, all of them, fulfilled in their season. In the temple, Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna, prophesied of Christ, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. In the wilderness, John lifted up his voice as Isaiah had predicted ; and, speaking of our Lord to the cities of Judah, boldly said, Behold your God ! Is it possible to deny these things, or to account for these predictions, unless we admit they were divine ?

Fourthly ; the vast extent of prophecy demands our notice. Of the grand object of prophecy, it is said, he is the image of the invisible God ; that all things were created by him, and for him ; that he is before all things, and that by him all things consist.

Prophecies proportioned to this object, and to the benevolence of his Incarnation, must be
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of prodigious extent. Nor are we disappointed. For the prophets speak of him, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; as actually put to death in the fulness of time; as rising from the dead; and as reigning, till all his enemies are put beneath his feet. In short, their prophecies are stretched out, from the beginning to the conflagration; and run on, from that awful event, to the final state of the whole creation of God!

Our little minds grasp at nothing so great. The most ambitious amongst mankind, never aspired to such dominion. They who thirsted for universal empire, aimed not so much to preside with judgment, as to rule by force. They had a lust of power; but of knowledge, they had but little ambition. The consequence was, their dominion, when most of all extended, only seemed to be extensive. Their boasted conquests left unsubdued the better part of man. Their victories were obtained by blood, and secured by bondage. Over how many minds did these mighty heroes rule? Over very few indeed: each

each perhaps, the worse for such imperious lords.

Whence then, was it, that men shut up in Judea, and fond of their own contracted country to an extreme ; whence was it, that these men, were indulged with visions so important, and with thoughts so sublime ; whilst the princes of this world, panting for posthumous fame, and assisted by every kind of genius to procure it, were always fettered by carnal attachments, and content to be praised for mischievous pursuits ? Was it for their own sakes, the prophets had this pre-eminence ? They disclaim the pretension. Was it for the Jews alone, they were thus illuminated ? The contrary is conspicuous. The truth is, they were taught by God, and shone with imparted splendor, as the stars in heaven, to every nation, tongue, and people.

Yet how have these illustrious men been treated ? To hear what some people have said of them, is provoking. From their invectives, one would imagine, they were a set of men
as

as contracted in their notions, as they were different from the commonality of mankind. In what strength of stile have some poets dressed up their own trifles; and some philosophers displayed their own conjectures? With what art, and malignity, have they, and other popular writers, aspersed inspired prophets! But after all, where are the poets?—where are the philosophers?—where are the popular writers, that can be compared with Moses, David, and Isaiah? In Judah, God was known: his Name was great in Israel. In his light, the sons of Jacob saw, and, by his grace, they said, what hath exceeded every thing yet seen, and said, in the court of the Gentiles, as much as the splendor of the morning exceeds the twilight of departed day.

In the fifth place; the diversified conditions of those Seers who prophesied of Christ, is a circumstance too remarkable to be overlooked. Some of them prophesied in sackcloth; others, in splendid apparel. Among them, we behold shepherds and husbandmen; **men** of superior abilities; **men** of political importance;

importance ; persons of royal extraction ; and even kings of considerable renown.

This cloud of witnesses is as diversified as we can well imagine ; and, like that magnificent pillar which appeared to the camp of Israel, it undoubtedly was the gift of God. That pillar, however, was of short duration ; but this mystic cloud yet continues, and has lost nothing of its light from its first formation.

It is peculiar to prophecy to increase in splendor as it groweth old. Miracles may affect us the less by being wrought in times immemorial. History, as it becomes antient, becomes obscure. But prophecy, is more luminous, as its date draws back ; because, as time rolls on, new events come forward, and by them, those seals are opened, which none were able to loose, till those events arrived.

Sixthly ; pleasing as this circumstance may seem, yet, if the testimony of the prophets was not as harmonious, as their condition in
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this world was various, the friends of revelation would feel themselves disappointed. But they perceive the prophets had invariably, one object in view; and that they always spake of him to answer the same end. This is so evident, that they might have said,—Walked we not in the same spirit? Walked we not in the same steps? Believers, therefore, beholding that unity and variety in the predictions of the prophets, which they observe to be more or less conspicuous in all the works of God, cannot but conclude, such prophecies must be from heaven, and not of men.

The ungodly temper of Balaam no more affects the piety of the prophets, than the treachery of Judas is of any real reproach to the apostles of Christ. Balaam, Judas, and Caiphas, were bad men: but who has given us that information? Whatever they might be, each of these unhappy men said those things we may safely credit; because it is clear their prophecies and confessions were not of themselves, or from their own previous resolutions.

Let

Let us then, distinguish between those who have spoken the truth in love, and those who have made it too evident they loved the works and wages of iniquity. We are exhorted to take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering afflictions, and of patience; and (if we are attentive to that distinction just now suggested) where shall we find better examples of undissembled patience in distress, or of piety in peace?

After all, it still appears, the light which the prophets received and reflected, does not come down to us, without some shades of darkness. It may be compared to the light of the moon obscured with clouds; a light sufficiently strong and extensive, to prove it cannot be artificial; though it is neither so near us, nor so luminous, as to prevent the giddy from making gross mistakes.

In reading some part of the prophecies, one would imagine the night was turned into

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day;

day ; so plainly in those parts, do the prophets speak of Christ, and of salvation by him alone ; and so strongly do they describe the nature, blessings, and prosperity of his peculiar kingdom. But in the most brilliant parts of their predictions, that occurs which seemeth strange to human wisdom. For it appears, when they were most illuminated, they said that to others, which they themselves did not fully understand. They searched therefore, what, or what manner of time, the *Spirit* of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when *it* testified beforehand, of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. This practice, and the report of it by Peter, is so far from lessening the weight of the prophetic testimony, that it augments its force ; since nothing can be more considerable on this subject, than what makes it most manifest, that the prophets were holy men of God, and that they really spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

SUM up now, if you please, what hath been said on the *force* of that testimony which the prophets

prophets give to the character and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

We have seen they were not private witnesses, but men called of God to speak by his authority, and in his name, to all nations. We have taken a view of the antiquity, continuance, and extent, of their prophecies; of the diversified conditions of these witnesses, while in this world; of the unity of their testimony; of their being unable fully to comprehend their own predictions; their confession of that fact, and their diligence to discover what was the mind of the *Spirit*; we have glanced at least, at all these things; and observed how strongly the events of every century pleads for the authenticity of the word of God; and now say, whether what hath been produced does not prove, we have a most sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts.

Though it be not common to make the re-

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mark, we may yet add, that the *typical* institutions before and after the flood, and throughout the Mosaic dispensation, may be considered as involving so many predictions of the approaching advent, and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Prediction may be expressed by signs, as well as words; or by both, better than by words alone: and, when those typical institutions, which have been mentioned, are compared with verbal prophecies, and the agreement between them is discerned, we are convinced, that this union was not of chance, and own it was formed by divine direction.

The law was, we are expressly told, a shadow of good things to come, the body of which is Christ. Let us consider how much, and how long, that shadow was regarded by men of piety and understanding; and how exactly, when Christ appeared, the shadow and the substance corresponded—let us consider these things with due attention, and we shall of course conclude, that predictions so varied,
multiplied,

multiplied, and fulfilled, cannot be deemed cunningly devised fables.

OBJECTIONS against the Prophecies of Christ are numerous, because they are vain. Could better be fabricated, those in circulation would soon be given up. Hitherto the ablest objectors have done little more than remind us, there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord : and, why should we fear that any fresh assault will ever prevail against the Almighty ?

More pains have been taken with some of our adversaries than seem to be commendable. For, though no man is absolutely below a Christian's notice, there is a decent regard which every good man owes to his subject, and himself ; and, in some kinds of silence, there is a dignity which great men have always applauded. Truth, though important, may be well enough defended without giving way to personal disputes. But, if at any time they are unavoidable, they are such as may find employ for virtue, and may end

in honour to each of the contending parties.

It has been suspected, that if some infidels had not been persons of greater consequence on account of their property and power, than from their natural and acquired abilities, so much pains had not been taken to answer their frivolous objections. Surely, the love of the world has produced greater absurdities than any other principle. What concessions have been made, what arguments used, and what misconduct indulged, to gain or secure, the praise or the property of bad men ! In such contests, virtue finds no employ ; but it is to be lamented, that in these struggles, vice should be so frequently rewarded.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? yet who believeth that, who doth not believe what the prophets have testified of him ? Why should what they have witnessed, seem to us incredible ? For if no man, even *now*, can say, in a proper temper, that Jesus
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is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, how should any uninspired person have foretold, so many ages before the Incarnation, that Christ *would* be Lord, to the glory of God the Father; and that unto him, every knee should bow, every tongue should swear?

A prophet, even in Pagan estimation, was of no account without his *AFFLATUS*; nor a poet without his *MUSE*. Whence the prevalence of these opinions; not only among the unlearned, but among the *literati*? Probably, from tradition; for the renown of Moses, and of other prophets, under different names, had been carried very early into the remotest regions. Probably also, national pride contributed something to the spread of these sentiments. For why should Egypt, Greece, and Italy, be less the care of heaven than Judea? This, the inhabitants of those celebrated countries were unwilling to admit. But it is still more probable, that these notions became current as they found they could not, on other principles, account for certain predictions of their own prophets, nor for some sublime pro-

ductions of their own poets. Let this be determined as you please ; yet since we are expressly told, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private impulse, it is not irrational in us, but right, to live in that belief, till it appears that the ground of our confidence is likely to fail.

Could they who write against revelation succeed, the consequences would be very painful. Were we, on their principles, to reject the Prophecies of Christ, instead of relying any longer on that testimony we have so much reason to believe is divine, we should be let loose to embrace reports changeable as the wind, and hollow as deceit. In this situation, we should either float from system to system, till life was worn out in the vain pursuit ; or, wearied with sceptical notions, we should unite ourselves to some favourite leader ; or, if yet unsettled, we should now be for this, and then for that audacious adventurer ; or, wearied with every change, we should at last, perhaps, resolve to set up for ourselves, and aspire to dominion over others.

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If the first of these suppositions were embraced, what could be more vexatious? If the second, we should be in a state of bondage. If the third, we should only change one imperious lord for another. If the fourth, we should soon be convinced of our elaborate folly. For he that aspires to illicit dominion over the minds of men, must first, form a plausible system, different in appearance at least from those which have been already esteemed. Secondly, he must endeavour to dress it up, and make it fit for public inspection. Thirdly, he must defend it against the most formidable opposition. Of that he will find there is no end; since they who oppose him are sure to be many in number, most of them exasperated at his vanity, and all of them extremely reluctant that he should take the professor's chair.

Of how much labor and sorrow then, are they eased who live by faith! What vexations do they escape, what peace and hope do they possess! They receive what the prophets have said, not as the words of Moses, or of any other man ;

man ; but as the word of God. They endeavour to interpret the prophetic pages with circumspection. They wait, with patience, for those providential events which may sanction their previous conjectures ; and rejoice they have already had so many opportunities to remark, that between the operations of divine Providence, and the most antient predictions, there is an agreement which confirms their faith.

The close connection between the Old Testament and the New, is clearly perceived by men of this description ; and from it they derive considerable advantage.

Of this connection our Lord himself took repeated notice. To the two disciples, who were going to Emmaus, he said, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ; and beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself. Afterwards, to the Eleven he said, These are the words which I spake unto you,
while

while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding to understand the scriptures; and they, thus illuminated, believed that the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy; or, as the original text may be translated, that the spirit of prophecy was the testimony of Jesus.

If we are favoured with the same kind of understanding, we shall have the same belief; and, in proportion to the degree of our faith, we, as well as the primitive believers, shall look up to Christ as our honour, and shall rejoice in him with a joy approaching to that which is unspeakable and full of glory. But the more we know of mankind, the more we perceive, that as their hearts are affected, so are their pursuits; and, as different characters are esteemed by them, so is their behaviour.

Had any earthly king entered on his reign,
after

after antient and repeated predictions, that his dominion should be universal and everlasting, what attention would the records of such predictions command! But when the Father bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, saying (according to prophecies the most antient and repeated) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom; lo! men reply (yea even yet reply) there is no beauty in him, wherefore we should desire him. In this perverse temper all men continue till the vail is taken from their heart, and it is turned to the Lord: then, with open face, they behold his glory; and say, Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes are we healed.

In short, if, from general information, we actually possess a love of preference for Jesus Christ, our future inquiries will be crowned with success: but if that be wanting, and
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aversion to his kingdom and person prevail, were we to be ever learning, we could not come to the knowledge of the truth. None of the wicked shall understand. The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them : but transgressors shall fall therein.

It gives me pleasure, that I have spoken of these things, as a believer to believers. The continuance of that pleasure is desired and expected in the following discourses on the Character of Christ.—On them, and this, may God command his blessing ! AMEN.

SERMON II.

S E R M O N II.

ON THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST.

JOHN viii. 58.

BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS I AM.

IN this sermon, it is taken for granted, we have no knowledge of the Pre-existence of Christ, but what the scriptures impart ; and that what they say on this subject is of the highest authority. But it is also taken for granted, that our judgment of what is there written is not infallible.

On these principles, it becomes us to search the scriptures carefully ; to speak of what we find, or think we have found in them, with caution ; and to be reasonably open to conviction :—but, on these principles, it also becomes us to be deaf to every false alarm.

Should

Should any man, however respectable, attempt to terrify us, by pronouncing a curse on those who cannot subscribe to his opinion, surely, we have no reason to tremble at his intemperate resentment. We may be confident, the curse causeless shall not come.

A different disposition, it is hoped, will pervade this discourse. It is the result of some reading, and of many thoughts, on this mysterious subject. It will not be curtailed, lest some superior should be provoked; nor will it be enlarged, on any intention to exasperate men of understanding, or merely to fill up this part of my proposed plan. No, it will contain the best account I am able to give of the Pre-existence of our Lord, and such additional remarks as may supply what is defective in it, or shew that the substance of that account deserves your re-consideration.

That our Lord, according to the *flesh*, was born of the Virgin Mary, in Bethlehem, under the reign of Tiberius, is undoubted. Whether before he was the reputed son of Joseph,
he

he existed, and in what character, we are now to inquire.

The Jews, in general, believed (what some authors now believe) that Christ did not exist till he was born of Mary ; and that he was a mere man. Christ affirmed of himself, that he had a prior existence. Your Father Abraham, said he, rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old ; and hast thou seen Abraham ? Our Lord replied, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am. At this answer, the Jews were highly offended. The words I AM, were held by them in great reverence. They could not apply them to any object but JEHOVAH : but that Jesus had any, the least claim to such honour, they denied with indignation. They even took up stones, and cast at him.

We are now to consult the scriptures on this article of our creed. To do this with caution, let us first consider what evidence
they

they afford us of the Pre-existence of Christ; and then, by the same medium, discover if we can, what our Mediator was before his Incarnation.

I. The evidence which the scriptures exhibit of the Pre-existence of Christ, is more than careless readers imagine; more than prejudiced readers will admit; and much more than can be produced in a single sermon. Perhaps, the following abridgement of it will be thought sufficient for this discourse.

In the Old Testament we find *one* object who frequently appeared to the antient patriarchs, distinguished from every other. This illustrious person, in a manner we cannot explain, appeared to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and others, with a kind of dignity that must have been dangerous, unless he had been truly that prophet that should come into the world.

From these appearances, and from what inferior prophets said of him, the *antient Jews*

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firmly believed he was the Lord of Hosts : so Isaiah called him, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. Solomon introduces this illustrious object in one of his sublimest compositions, speaking thus : Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom. I am understanding. I have strength. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way : before his works of his old. I was set up from everlasting ; from the beginning, or ever the earth was.—Then was I by him, as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his delight : rejoicing always before him. Rejoicing in the habitable parts of HIS earth : and MY delights were with the sons of men.

It is easy to say, that these words are to be explained, by conceiving that Solomon speaks of an impersonal quality, agreeable to the vivid colouring of the eastern stile, and not of any person then actually existing, and who was afterwards to be manifested in the flesh. But, the literal sense of scripture is not to be given up, where it contains nothing inconsistent with the analogy of faith, or with the context

text of the sacred writer. On this principle, the words of Solomon may be safely applied to Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, as we have seen, the Pre-existence of our Lord is strongly asserted; and the evidence exhibited of the same fact in the New Testament, is as clear and strong; taken together, it would be petulant in us to wish for more.

John says, In the beginning was THAT Word which was afterwards made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth. In another place he says, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; [For the life was manifested; and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us:] THAT which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship

with us : and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

The words of John are worthy that Evangelist ; and the following words are worthy of Jesus Christ. He was risen from the dead. John was in banishment, in the isle of Patmos, for the word of God. Our Lord appeared to him in that lonely place, and said, I am Alpha and Omega ; the first and the last. John turned to see from whom this voice proceeded ; and being turned, he saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. When he saw him, he fell at his feet as dead. But he who spake to him, laid his right hand upon him, and said, Fear not, I am the first, and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and death.—If this does not prove it was JESUS that appeared to John, and that he is *Alpha*, or from the beginning, we must I believe, despair of obtaining satisfaction of the Pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

II. But

II. But now, a deeper question calls for our attention. For the question is, **WHAT** was Christ in his pre-existent state ?

That he was a person, we may take for granted. They who deny it, whatever may be their consequence on other subjects, are upon this, of no consequence at all. Still it remains to be considered, whether our Lord, in that state, was a man, an angel, or, in a peculiar sense, the Son of God.

The first of these propositions, I venture to deny ; and say, he was not a man. My reasons are, because he was afterwards, and not before, made in the likeness of men ; and because what is attributed to him, prior to his Incarnation, cannot be ascribed to any thing that we know, or believe of human nature. We are told, that God made man ; and therefore, it seems incredible that he would say to him, Let us make man, in *our* image, after *our* likeness.

But, whatever our Lord was before he dwelt

amongst us, we must admit, if he existed before the foundation of the world, that he was a person of uncommon excellence, and possessed of exuberant understanding. Yet Luke says, of the child Jesus, that he grew and waxed strong in spirit. If this be true; if the child that was born of Mary, gradually grew in wisdom and in stature; if, while the Virgin held him in her arms, he really knew not what homage was paid him by the eastern Magi, and afterwards by others; are we to suppose his previous intellectual excellence was lost? or, that though he seemed a babe, he was then as rich in understanding as he that made the world, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power? If he *really* lost his former wisdom, what end was it to answer? Wherein could such waste of the highest worth be a benefit to us? or how could such an example produce humility? If, on the contrary, the child of Mary only *seemed* to be a babe in understanding, but was, in truth, as wise then as now, this conclusion bears hard on the character of an inspired writer; and should that be given up as indefensible, where
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are we to stop, and on what must we rely in reference to the character of Christ ?

Further ; I contend, that our Lord in his Pre-existent state, was not an angel, in the common acceptation of that ambiguous term. It is well known the word angel is not expressive of the nature of any agent, but of his office ; and that it literally signifies a messenger, whether he is more or less important.

There is a wide difference between created angels and that Lord who is called the messenger of the covenant. Of him, it is said, And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish ; but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. Thus spake the Father to his Son. But to which of the angels said he, at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy

footstool? Are they not *all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?—I conclude, therefore, that since our Mediator was neither a man, nor an angel, before his Incarnation, he was a person superior to both: not that I mean to say, he was super-angelical (a phrase as arbitrary as it is uninstrueting); no, from what has been adduced, and from other portions of scripture, I am fully persuaded, that he who became Incarnate was, in a sense peculiar to himself, THE SON OF GOD.

The sonship of Christ is a subject far above our comprehension. I am glad it is: for could we, with our slender abilities, comprehend this mystery, the object comprehended by us would sink in our esteem. But as an article of faith, I have long thought, and yet think, that the sonship of Christ is of such importance as by no means to be given up, however unpopular it may appear, or though we should meet with some objections extremely difficult to be removed.

You

You will not wish me to explain what I never professed to understand. On this subject, I am merely a believer; and my belief amounts to this: that the term, Son, is not to be applied to the divine *nature* of our Lord, but to his *person*; that so considered, he is the only begotten Son of God; that the term, *begotten*, is not to be taken up either in the metaphorical or literal sense of that expression; but is to be interpreted as a term which gives us an analogical notion of a real fact; and that no other word will convey to us exactly the same meaning. It is most certain, God is not a man. To argue, therefore, as if he was, and, because he is pleased to speak to us in our own language, to suppose there is but little difference between the human nature and the divine, is extremely rash. 'Tis hard to say, whether a contempt of reason, or a rage for reasoning, have done the most mischief. If that from which we reason is not at all understood, our deductions, however numerous or ingenious, are delusive. We are therefore, on those subjects which are to us of the
greatest

greatest moment, compelled to live by faith, or to live in error : but we may safely *believe* many things of which we neither have, nor can have, direct and adequate notions ; provided our faith rests on that authority which our reason tells us it would be foolish and wicked to resist.

As to *self-existence*, were they who plead for it, to confess they do not comprehend what they assert, so far, by their modesty, they might attract attention ; but when they seem to know much of that which passeth all understanding, and proceed to apply self-existence to the *person* of Christ, they give offence, and will find at last that their positive assertions can by no means answer their sanguine expectations.

To say that Christ is a son *by office*, is less artful than it is evasive. If he who is in office is not a son, what must that office be that can give existence to filiation ? Some post it seems, under the œconomy of Salvation. But God is above all his works. Creation, Redemption, and Providence, may make
manifest

manifest what God is to angels and to men; yet neither these divine operations, nor all the blessings of grace, are the ground of that eternal and immutable relation which subsists between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Such are my notions of the Pre-existence of Christ. If this discourse be shorter than you expected, the difficulty of treating the subject with becoming caution, must be my apology. However, before we conclude, and for the purposes which have been mentioned, I shall now add the following remarks.

I. If Christ did not pre-exist his dwelling amongst us, he had no knowledge of the church or world, of himself or his heavenly Father, till some years after he was born of Mary. But is it possible to believe, that patriarchs, prophets, and an innumerable company of angels, take the lead of our Lord in the antiquity of their understanding? He that can believe this, may believe more; and indeed, there is nothing more silly than the credulity of unbelievers. It deserves your notice,

notice, that they who have jested most at orthodox sentiments, have, by a just series of consequences, been given up to believe the most unaccountable things that ever were circulated amongst mankind. For my own part, I have long since observed, that they who affect to sneer at creeds, have always one of their own. Every man believes something; and he who deviates most from that testimony which is the standard of religious truth, lives in the belief of those sentiments which believers have a right to despise.

II. If Christ did not pre-exist, it must follow, that he did not execute any public office till after he was baptized. But what! are we to suppose that the Church of God was actually without a prophet, priest, and king, till Jesus, according to the *flesh*, began to be about thirty years of age? If so, the prophets, priests, and kings, under the Levitical œconomy, had a priority which contradicts all that is testified of them in the sacred scriptures. To attempt a formal refutation of this wild opinion would be a waste of time,

time, an abuse of your patience, and an affront to your religious understanding.

III. If Christ did not pre-exist, his Incarnation must be denied. The birth of Christ was not as ours, but by his own choice. He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.—For as much as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.—For verily he took not on him the nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Here are such evident marks of our Lord's being Incarnate by his own *choice*, that they cannot be set aside. Nor can we wish them to be effaced. To what end ? Since where choice has no place, religion has no power. His assumption of our nature did not make him a person ; but his Incarnation makes it manifest that his person is divine. On any other supposition we cannot conceive he could have taken hold of angels ; and, unless this be granted, on the seed of Abraham he could not have taken hold.

Of

Of the Incarnation of our Lord I am to speak in the following discourse ; all therefore, now contended for is, that between it and his Pre-existence, the connection is so close, that if the latter be denied, the former must be given up.

To introduce a different turn to these inferential remarks, instead of negative deductions, let us take it for granted, that our Lord really did pre-exist as the Word of God.

If this be admitted, we must allow, that in dignity, he is greater, not only than Moses and Aaron, but that, as the Son of God, he is far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Should it be said, this text speaks of our Lord's exaltation after his resurrection, we answer, neither his resurrection, nor any thing else, makes his person to be that it was not from the beginning. In the beginning, he was the Son of his Father, in truth and love. How else, to believers
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in him, could Paul have reasoned thus : If children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ? When we consider that Jesus Christ is the word of God, the Son of God, the Lord from heaven, the quickning Spirit, the Messenger of the Covenant of Grace, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever ; when we are told, that being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; we must confess, we meet in these expressions, a grandeur we can neither overlook, nor comprehend.

I am aware, that the sense of some of these words, and of others, which relate to the divinity of Christ, is controverted : and shall only say, that what is here quoted in favour of that article of our faith, seems to me to admit of ample defence. But by defending the divinity of our Lord, I mean, the giving a good account why we are persuaded of it, and not to insinuate it is in our power to make that evident to our reason, which is only revealed to our faith.

Some

Some believers, while Christ was on earth, beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of his Father, full of grace and truth ; but since his ascension, who can say how many, with open face, have beheld, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord ? But still, as in a glass. If that mirrour is removed, we either lose sight of his glory, or form fantastic notions of it ; as it is regarded, the glory of our Lord is to believers, at once, incontestable and incomprehensible.

Again ; if Christ pre-existed as has been supposed, his condescension bears a proportion to his dignity.—Paul said to the Romans, Mind not high things ; but condescend to men of low estate. Yet, where, I pray, is the wonderful condescension in one Roman being respectful to another ? Or in one man being courteous to another ? Vanity often makes us think we have condescended greatly, when common sense would have drawn a very different conclusion. The character of Christ is not liable to such censure. The more attentively we consider it, the more we are convinced

vinced his condescension is without the shadow of equality among the sons of men. The same mind may be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; but it is not possible that the same character should belong to us and him. Whatever resemblance there may be between Christ and Christians, the disparity is as conspicuous, and as instructing, as the agreement. Our condescension must be tinged with our low and weak condition; and, on that account, it can never be so great to our fellow men, as it is sometimes represented; but the voluntary humility of the Son of God, is such as produces in heaven itself, lasting admiration.

Further; from the pre-existence of Christ it appears, that his compassion to his people is as great as his condescension. It is said, Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself partook of the same. Who is not touched with such goodness, and charmed with such commiseration? But why this painful sympathy, this holy partiality, to the children? Were they by

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nature,

nature, or without grace, better than others? No, in no wise. Why, therefore, so compassionate to them? The answer is, that through death, [his own death, his death on the cross] he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people.

Wonderful compassion! have we not felt its force? Shall we ever forget its sacred influence? Allured by it, we have taken courage to approach unto God, when otherwise, we had been driven far from him. Feeling its power, our resentments to our fellow men have died away, and we have put on at once, and with ease, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long suffering. May we reflect on those moments with the most grateful acknowledgments, and, by a renewal of them, more and more adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour!

It now, I hope, appears, that from the
pre-

pre-existence of our Lord, believers may derive strong consolation. It is that which makes his Incarnation illustrious, his obedience glorious, his atonement precious, and his resurrection the solid ground of their lively hope. But for the union of the divine and human nature in Christ, how could we confide in him, or believe, that all power in heaven and earth is put into his hands? Till we behold Immanuel, we are always exposed to delusion, or distress. But resting on the divinity and filiation of our Lord, the veil of his flesh does not diminish, but increase our confidence in his mediation. It removes the fear of our being thought presumptuous; since we are told, that is the new and living way which is consecrated for us; and that in it we are ever welcome to draw near unto God.

Were we, my brethren, constantly to walk up and down in the name of the Lord, and to live by faith on the Son of God, in a settled and sound persuasion, that he has loved us, and given himself for us, and has made

kings and priests unto God and his Father, we should live in the best manner it is possible to live in this world, and should leave it, when we are called hence, not only without regret, but in hope that the grace bestowed upon us, will terminate in glory.

These are strong inducements to believe in Christ: yet how great is the number of unbelievers! What must they feel, when they shall be convinced of having deliberately rejected the only name under heaven, whereby they must be saved!

How are we to address this unthinking, or deluded set of people? To say we pity them, while they think they need it not, is but to provoke resentment, and, in their eyes, to make ourselves ridiculous. To throw out illiberal invectives, would ill become us, who have so frequently confessed, we are saved by grace. To connive at their folly, and form apologies for it, would be equally offensive to the Almighty. What then remains, but that we reprove, rebuke,
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and exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. This is our duty, as a capacity, and a proper opportunity to discharge it, are united; nor is it then, on any pretence, to be omitted.

They who are left without remedy, are always left without excuse. Unbelief gains no dominion over them, without the evil dispositions of their own hearts. If they imagine, THAT is not to be accounted evil, which, by their own power, they cannot resist, or remove, they are deceived; and the deception, I fear, is very common. The question is not, what they can, or cannot be, as independents; (for no man, accurately speaking, is an independent, except in his own imagination;) but the question is, what they might avoid, and pursue, by divine assistance. This question, however, can never be answered by speculation. Up and try, in that way which God hath directed, is essential to the sober solution of it.

But it is said, The wicked, through the
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pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; and, that God is not in all his thoughts. Now, though God should be found of them that sought him not; yet should he leave such persons to die in their sins, they would justly perish in their own folly.—How far any of us ever indulged this evil temper, let each of us, for himself, consider: and may we remember, that though our unbelief may be accounted for by the depravity of human nature, yet that faith which accompanies salvation, must be attributed to sovereign grace!

S E R M O N III.

ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

LUKE ii. 7.

AND SHE BROUGHT FORTH HER FIRST-BORN SON,
AND WRAPPED HIM IN SWADDLING CLOTHES,
AND LAID HIM IN A MANGER ; BECAUSE THERE
WAS NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE INN.

NEVER was any object so much expected, or so ardently desired, as Jesus Christ ; yet never were any people more disappointed than those who waited for his appearing. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and it knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. In short, after all the prophets had said, and all that John could say, unto the Jews he was a stumbling block ; and after every thing the Apostles could urge, and Paul

himself could preach, unto the Greeks, Christ was foolishness.

How are we to account for this contempt of the Son of God?—That may be done sufficiently, by giving a due attention to prophecy and history, and by serious reflections on our own behaviour towards the same object.

From prophecy, it appears, that other, and better treatment of our Lord in the vail of his flesh, was not, at first, to be expected. He cometh, saith Malachi, but who may abide the day of his coming? and who may stand when he appeareth? How beautiful upon the mountains, said Isaiah, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringing good tidings of good; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! Yet the same prophet, speaking of our Lord's first appearance after his Incarnation, asks, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

vealed? and declares he is despised and rejected of men.

From history, it is manifest, such was the state of the church and world, at the Incarnation of Christ, (of which sufficient proof will be given in its proper place,) that it was not probable that his visit would be welcome either to the Jews or Gentiles. When he was born, there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the *inn*; and when he went up to Jerusalem, there was no room for him in the *temple*. In the moment the Virgin was to be delivered, she was obliged to withdraw into a stable; and when her son said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem—how often would I have gathered thy *children* together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! at that moment, the heads of houses in the abandoned city, conspired to put him to death. Nothing could soften their resentments. Unable to take away his life themselves, they applied to Pilate, and roared out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend.

From

From reflection on our own behaviour towards the Son of God, we have reason to believe, that had we lived in those days, we might have been carried away with the frenzy of the times ; and either have mocked the Lord of glory, or have thought him an object beneath our notice. If in a Christian country, we have sincerely embraced that report which the Prophets and Evangelists have given us of him, and have believed unto righteousness, it has been owing to that grace which excites our wonder, and mortifies our pride, and by which, we have often confessed, all ground of boasting is effectually excluded.

Having removed an objection which seemed to stand in our way, let us now give a closer attention to the Incarnation of our Lord : not with a view to explain what is incomprehensible, but with a wish, and endeavor, to make such remarks as may confirm our faith in it, as may incline us to be more thankful for salvation by him, and may lead us to be more obedient to his will.

Previous

Previous to these remarks, permit me to say, that in this discourse, and throughout these lectures, ye are rather to regard the SUBJECT which is introduced, than to expect a *minute* attention to the words of the TEXT. It being my purpose to treat on the character of Christ, every lecture will bring forward a distinct subject subservient to that design. I wish therefore your attention to them as they are produced; and perhaps it will be found, that such a method of preaching may include a better exposition of the leading words of the text than some are apt to suppose.

My first observation on the present subject is, that very much depends on our obtaining right notions of HIM who was made flesh and dwelt among us. We are not allowed to say, he was the Father, or the holy Spirit; much less are we permitted to say, he was a created angel; least of all are we at liberty to say, that he who became incarnate was in his former state, a man.

Without

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness : and what less could be expected, if God was manifest in the flesh ? The moment any person positively rejects this great mystery, he sinks into something which is absurd, and cannot avoid falling into the crudest contradictions. This is the more remarkable, because by a bold effort to comprehend what is only open to belief, he is justly left to grope as if he had no eyes, and to stumble at the noon day as in the night.

Who our Lord was in his pre-existent state has been considered ; and upon a review of that subject, it is thought, that while we live in belief of his being the Son of God, we need not be alarmed at the most formidable opposition which can be made to our faith. But should we turn aside from what God hath testified of his Son, to embrace the doctrines of those men, whose rage for erring reason hath pushed them into notice ; or should we be seized with the frenzy of explaining inexplicable things, we have every thing unpleasant to expect. For God resisteth

resisteth the proud, though he giveth grace to the humble.

Secondly ; the Incarnation of Christ was not only the subject of prophecy for four thousand years, but the great thing promised to be fulfilled at the commencement of the present dispensation. It was a prediction of this event, which first terrified Satan for his seduction of Eve. It was the promise of the seed of the woman, which gave our trembling parents the first ray of hope ; and from that hour to this, Satan has fled from no other adversary : nor by any other advocate than Jesus Christ the righteous, hath one burdened conscience been properly relieved.

That the woman from whom the promised seed was to be expected, should be a virgin, Isaiah plainly foretold. Behold, said he, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL. That this virgin was to be of the house and lineage of David, when that illustrious house had fallen from

from its former splendour ; that her son should be born at Bethlehem, when the sceptre was departing from Judah ; that he should be persecuted as soon as he was born ; that he should rise superior to persecution, temptation, and death, and live, and reign for ever—all this the Prophets foretold—all this God promised to fulfil—all this, God hath performed !

What could seem more incredible than these things ? The Incarnation was contrary to the course of nature ; and, in a moral view, who could expect such mercy to be manifested to a ruined world, and to an apostate church ? Yet so it was, that when the days were accomplished in which the Virgin should be delivered, she brought forth her first born son. How great is the power, and the faithfulness of God ! How wonderful his mercy to mankind ! He delights, yes, he delights to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think ! And surely, we may infer, if he hath not withheld from us his only begotten son ;
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if he hath not spared him, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things.

In the third place; the Incarnation of our Lord, may be considered as miraculous. If a miracle is an extraordinary work of God, in which he subverts, changes, or suspends, the known courses, or settled laws of nature, the conception of the Virgin, must be allowed to have been truly miraculous; and as this miracle was repeatedly *foretold*, we must confess, that both miracle and prophecy concur to teach us the importance of what is commonly called, the Incarnation.

Of miracles, I am to speak hereafter. But if the birth of Christ was miraculous, let me here observe, that a miracle may be the subject of our belief, before we have any sensible evidence of the fact. It was not thought proper to leave the holy Virgin in a state of perplexity; yet if Gabriel had not said unto her, Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name
Jesus;

Jesus ; if he had not answered her natural question, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ? The same miracle might have been performed ; and it seems it was wrought, before she had any sensible evidence that she had conceived. At first, Mary was merely a believer ; and her faith was deservedly, very much commended. After Gabriel delivered his message to her, she arose, and went into the hill country in *haste*, and entered into the house of Elizabeth : and Elizabeth said unto Mary, Blessed is she that *believed*, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

I fear we seldom possess accurate apprehensions of our own corporal, or intellectual abilities. In our estimations they are too frequently, every thing, or nothing, just as some idle persuasion happens to prevail. Either we are fettered by defective definitions, or disdaining those limits, like comets, we wander out of sight, and know not whither we wander, or where we are to rest.

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But why should this miraculous conception of the Virgin seem to any of us incredible? If we admit there was a first man, we must admit, that the manner in which he was to be brought into existence, must have been very different from those who descended from him by ordinary generation. He was created, they are begotten; and, if the manner in which Adam was made, may not be considered as a miracle, this, at least, may be safely asserted, that we know of no miracle that more abundantly displays the power of God than Creation. To form, settle, and preserve, what is commonly called the course of nature, is as wonderful as any deviation from it; and, on the other hand, any deviation from the common course of things, is just as easy for the Almighty to effect, as to keep unbroken the usual rotation of common events. To say, therefore, that human nature must of necessity exist, either by creation, or by generation, is to advance what we cannot prove, and to indulge a kind of temerity that admits of no defence. 9

Fourthly; the Incarnation of Christ was
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an event, on which every thing depended that relates to the redemption of his people. By this the power of Satan was to be destroyed, and the kingdom of God in us, to be established. Had not our Lord taken on him the seed of Abraham, he could not have been made of a woman, nor made under the law. How then could he have redeemed them that were under it, or how were they to receive the adoption of sons? Had he not been Incarnate, he could not have been tempted, nor have performed that obedience which yields the tempted Christian his only hope of being victorious. Had he not been found in fashion as a man, who had ever heard of his death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession? But, having performed, in our nature, the functions of the high priest's office on earth, he, by virtue of his own blood, entered into the holiest place of all, having thus obtained eternal redemption for us.

Since then, by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. These words are applied, by the apostle, to the
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the first and second Adam. The first Adam, however, was a mere man in every condition ; when he was in paradise, when ejected from it, and after he had obtained grace : nor can our first father be any thing greater than man even in glory. But the second Adam is the Lord from heaven, and that quickening spirit who is the life of all them who put their trust in him. The result of these remarks terminates in this, had not our mediator been a MAN, he could not have redeemed us unto God ; and had he not been IMMANUEL, our redemption must have ceased for ever.

Some indeed, have thought it indecent to say, God could not have redeemed sinners without the death of Christ ; and, when we consider, that our salvation was not necessary, but is of grace, it does not become us to limit the holy One of Israel. But, on the other side of the question, it may be observed, had there been ten thousand ways in which the elect might have been saved, they were all of them, perfectly known to the Almighty, and that every other way but this, he

hath rejected. It becomes us therefore to suppose, that this way is chosen on sufficient grounds for the preference that is given unto it; and since we are told, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin; since upon any opposite supposition, we must have false notions of the evil and the strength of our depravity, ungrateful apprehensions of the death of Christ, and of the love of God, in the gift of his Son, we may be confident, that in the redemption of sinners by his blood, he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; and we may be satisfied, if we cordially approve of that grace which bringeth salvation, the just inference is, that we have not heard of it in vain.

In the fifth place; the grace of our Lord in his being found in fashion as a man, will still be the more conspicuous, if we consider, as was promised, the state of the church and world at the period of his Incarnation.

The Jews, in every age, from the death of Joshua to the birth of Christ, waxed worse and

and worse. If some reformati^ons intervened, they were partial, of short continuance, and constantly followed by shocking relapses into the worst of crimes. Their kingdom had been unhappily divided long before the birth of Christ; and the ten revolted tribes, some centuries before that event, had been carried into captivity far from the land of promise. Judah also, had suffered captivity in Babylon forty years; and, though returned with a mixed company, to their own land, at the Nativity, they were extremely corrupt, and in bondage to the civil power of Rome. The occasion of our Lord being born at Bethlehem, strongly marks their subjection to the Roman state. For there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. This decree brought Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem; and thus were the words of the prophet fulfilled: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel. But what a picture is given us of this people! They de-

nied that Jesus had any right to rule over them ; they hired false witnesses against him, and, on no better testimony, they treated him as a blasphemer in their supreme court of justice, and charged him as guilty of sedition at the bar of Pilate. There, by clamour, threatnings, and shocking imprecations, they obtained at last, sentence of death against him, and took care to see it executed, not only with rigour, but with insults which were extremely outrageous.

Who does not see from all this, that if Christ is to reign over Israel, he must rise from the dead, and that if the sons of Jacob are to submit to his sceptre, it must be owing to the plenitude of his power after his exaltation ? Believing this, David said, Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty ; with thy glory and thy majesty ; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ! All who are well affected to the kingdom of our Lord, will say Amen !

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If we turn from the Jews to the Gentiles, we perceive among them, at the same period, that idolatry, immorality, and pride, every where abounded, and was every where applauded. We have no reason to suppose that any of the Gentiles in those days, were superior to the Romans in might, in mental abilities, or in moral worth. Yet if we regard what Saint Paul has said of them, we must own, that their crimes were equal to any thing we have yet known of the corruption of human nature. If we surmise that his account is not exact, or that the exceptions were more numerous than is commonly imagined, Horace and Ovid, Seneca, Juvenal and Persius, have each of them said more than enough to make us revoke the suspicion.

In such a church and world, what could induce our Lord to appear? Surely, if the best of men were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another, his Incarnation

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must

must be attributed to his loving kindness, and the object of it the salvation of sinful men : not according to works of righteousness which they had done, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost ; that being justified by his grace, they should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

If the apostle Paul himself, if Titus, and others, like them, owed every thing to such grace, it was necessary to their salvation : and if they could not be saved at less expence, shall we imagine that inferior favour will give us the hope of heaven ?

Yes, it is said ; for their case and ours is not the same. They were brought up either in ignorance of Christianity, or under violent prejudices against it : whereas we were born in a Christian country, and brought up in the belief of the Christian religion.

It is confessed, we have reason to be thankful

ful for the place and period in which we were born. But, if from providential favors, it is concluded we have no need of special grace ; if because we were born of Christian parents, it is conceived we must of course be Christians, we are very much deceived. Besides ; as our advantages are many, our disadvantages are not a few. We see not those striking examples of the truth and excellence of Christianity, which were so conspicuous in the apostolick age : when men hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the contrary, many are now called Christians who are only so in name ; and much is held up amongst us, as Christian doctrine, which is inimical to Christianity. What is still more affecting, some of the most grievous corruptions of Christianity are *now* propagated, under pretence of bringing us back again to its original simplicity. Let no man, therefore, rely on his being born in Britain, or on the privileges of his education ; since it is still a fact, that unless he is born again, or from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Sixthly ;

Sixthly; the different dispositions of men when our Lord appeared amongst them, and the manner in which the report of his birth was varied to these discordant characters, is worth our notice. There was at that time, a general expectation that the Messiah would soon appear; but, as we have seen, that hope was blended with very erroneous apprehensions of him. The greater part looked for nothing more than a worldly prince; some of them had confused notions which they could neither explain, nor surmount; while a few, a very few, expected the promised Saviour.

Characters so evidently opposite were not to be treated alike; nor were they so treated. The Virgin was informed of the approaching advent of her son by an angel. Joseph was admonished of the birth of Christ by a dream. Zechariah and Elizabeth, were instructed by inspiration; and they had their faith confirmed by a visit from Mary. The shepherds heard of the glad tidings from the heavenly host. The Magi had their attention
raised

raised by a star : while Herod, and those who sided with him, had little more than confused reports of the Incarnation of our Lord. Who but the Almighty could thus have varied the mode of information ? and who does not perceive, that both wisdom and grace are conspicuous in these variations ? The consequence is, that we who are favoured with a narrative of these things, must either disbelieve it, or confess, that Christ is he who should come, and that we are not to look for any other.

In the last place ; the different effects which these tidings produced, were such as might have been expected. The most amiable and venerable characters received from them abundant consolation. Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord ; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour ! Zechariah said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited, and redeemed, his people ! Simeon blessed God and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy

thy salvation ! and Anna, coming in at that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. The shepherds, with that good sense, and with that simplicity, which are recorded to their honor, said, Let us go now, even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came in haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying that was told them, concerning this child. The wise men from the East, persevered in their intentions ; and seeing again that star which first excited their curiosity, they rejoiced with exceeding joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto HIM gifts ; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return

to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

While these amiable and venerable persons, thus rejoiced, Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Their consternation was inevitable ; not because their crimes had been many and great ; for crimes as often repeated, and as atrocious, our Lord came to forgive ; but because they despised that relief which God had provided for the chief of sinners, and attempted to justify themselves in their opposition to his anointed. They knew, if Jesus was the Christ, their vicious notions of a carnal Messiah, were replete with folly, and that they were as dangerous as they were absurd. Enraged therefore, at current reports, concerning the new-born babe, they endeavoured, by every form of opposition, to suppress the growing opinion that he was born a king. But all their efforts were in vain. The Lord laughed at their impotent attempts : he had them in derision. The word of his testimony prevailed. It yet prevails ;

vails ; and ever will be prevalent in the thing whereunto he is pleased to send it.

After all ; the important question is, How are we ourselves affected with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ ? Ye have heard my sentiments on this subject. Allow me to add, his Incarnation appears to me, the most remarkable, and important *epoch* of time, that was ever adopted by the sons of men. Without the prediction and history of the Incarnation, the world must have been left where our Redeemer found it ; in the region and shadow of death. The abasement of our Lord was essential to our happiness. By his poverty, we are enriched ; by his humility, we have hope ; and by that hope, we are humbled. Our resurrection is connected with his death ; and the quickning influences of the spirit, with his ascension into heaven. Now, by faith, we see our own nature, complete and perfect, in the holiest place of all : and, by faith, we follow our fore-runner into heaven itself ; expecting hereafter, to be with him, where he is, to behold his glory.

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But for his Incarnation, such a prospect had been impossible, and such a hope unenjoyed. It was in believing views of this, that David rejoiced before the ark; and it is beholding the glorious effects of our Lord's humility, that angels, and elders, rejoice before the throne. With a loud voice, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, in heaven, say, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

Ye will perhaps reply, What are our feeble voices, compared with this grand, and unexpiring shout? True; but what is *IT*, compared with that mercy, and with that majesty, which exceeds all praise? We have no reason to be dejected, because, compared with the heavenly inhabitants, we seem but as grasshoppers in our own apprehension. Let us rather wonder we should have any power to perceive, and any disposition to rejoice in, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. If he be formed in us, he cannot despise his
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own image, even where the impression of it is faint, and frequently obscured. A bruised reed he will not break ; the smoking flax he will not quench. No, he will bring forth judgment to victory. In us, may the gospel of his grace be continually victorious ; and over every thing that obstructs its reign in our hearts, may we be more than conquerors through him that loved us !—Amen.

S E R M O N IV.

ON THE INFANCY AND YOUTH OF CHRIST.

LUKE ii. 52.

AND JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND IN STATURE,
AND IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN.

OF the infancy and youth of Christ, we have only a very concise account in scripture. The ~~sales~~ tales and conjectures, which have been multiplied on this subject, are sufficiently numerous; but they are not here to be introduced.

On how many occasions are we taught the necessity and importance of revelation? As we are favored with that light, and walk in it, we enjoy religious satisfaction; but where it ceases to shine, ages roll on without giving

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us the least additional knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The historical narrative of his infancy and youth, in the New Testament, is to this effect : That he was born at Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary ; that, while an infant, he was taken into Egypt, to avoid the persecution of Herod ; that when brought back again to Judea, he was carried into Galilee, and afterwards to Nazareth ; that while he was there, he grew, and waxed strong in spirit, was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him ; that he continued in this obscure city till he was twelve years of age, and that then, he went up with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem ; that they missed him, on their return to Nazareth, and went back again to Jerusalem seeking him ; that they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing, and asking them questions ; that all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers ; and that Mary, and Joseph, were amazed at his wisdom. We are further told, on their asking

asking why he had served them thus, that he replied, Wist ye not, that I must be about my Father's business ? But it is plain, however superior he was to Joseph and Mary, in understanding, he went down with them to *Nazareth*, and was subject unto them ; where, we are informed, he still increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.

It is the unavoidable lot of him that is born of a woman, to come into this world in a state of weakness ; and, if he rises to eminence in it, gradually to increase in wisdom and in strength. The miraculous conception of Christ, did not exempt him from the common condition of humanity. Nor did he, in our nature, increase in excellence without the favour of God. Well, therefore, may the best of men, who are so inferior to him, say, By the grace of God, we are what we are.

If we consult the prophets concerning the private life of our Lord, we shall find, that

agreement between their predictions and the history of the New Testament which is highly pleasing ; and, by comparing the one with the other, what is asserted in our text, will be the more confirmed.

Isaiah, seven hundred years before the Incarnation, said, And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots : and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him : the spirit of wisdom and understanding ; the spirit of counsel and might ; the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord ; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. The prophet adds, And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But, says Isaiah, with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth ; and shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked : and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.—This prediction

diction perfectly agrees with the son of Mary ; and it agrees with no other object to whom it has been, or to whom it can be applied.

But, it has been objected, there is a seeming dissonance between what some of the inspired prophets have said of Jesus Christ : that Isaiah, speaking of him, says, He shall grow up before him, [his heavenly Father,] as a root out of a dry ground ; that he hath no form, nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him : but that David, speaking of the same object, is pleased to say, Thou art fairer than the children of men ; grace is poured into thy lips ; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.—This apparent contradiction may be removed on two suppositions ; neither of which is improbable. First, we may suppose, that Isaiah speaks of our Lord in his earliest appearance to the Jews after his nativity ; and that David speaks of him in his maturer age ; when some of his miracles had been wrought, and much of his wisdom had been displayed. Secondly, we

may suppose, that the son of Amoz drew his picture of the Messiah to agree with that opinion which *unbelievers* would form of him; and that the son of Jesse, sketched his profile of Christ, in such a manner, that those who *believed* in his name, would allow it to be strictly just.—If seeming paradoxes are apt to give us pain, we are ill qualified to enquire after truth; for though truth is immutable, yet as most of our affirmations are limited, beyond those limits very different things may be safely asserted of the same object. Young people would do well to remember this; and perhaps, some who are not young, may stand in need of such a remark.

But let us now descend to a few particular observations on the subject of this discourse.

In the first place; infancy and youth are terms which agree with our knowledge of human nature; but of the infancy and youth of the Word of God, we have no conception; and, I presume, of that, we have no belief. In him, there is no ground for progressive improvement.

improvement. But when he assumed our nature, he took it into the strictest unison with himself, with all its innocent infirmities. As the son of man therefore, he gradually advanced through the different stages of humanity, from infancy to childhood, to youth, and riper years; and as really grew in wisdom, and in stature, as John the Baptist, or as any other person. The means likewise of his corporal, and intellectual improvement, appear to have been what is common to mankind. He ate, drank, and slept; read, reflected, and prayed, as other holy men.

This throws an air of mystery over the subject of this sermon, which they who plume themselves on being very rational, are anxious to avoid. But those reasonings which are destructive of faith, or are intended to supply its place, are not to be trusted; and it will be found that they who have most of all indulged them, have reason to repent of their splendid indiscretion.

Of the true humanity of Christ, I have
G 4 spoken

spoken my mind freely, and with some strength of language. So that perhaps, ye may say, If the son of Mary was in so many respects like us, wherein did he differ from us? This question would be very difficult to answer on certain principles which are now pushed into notice, and too much esteemed. But on my principles, the answer is easy; whether it is just, judge for yourselves.—I reply then, that our Lord differs from us in his miraculous conception; in his being born without sin; in the ineffable union between him who was born of the Virgin and the Word of God; in his being anointed in our nature, with the oil of gladness above his fellows; in the peculiar ground of his relation to his father, and to his people; by those offices he is invested with, and honours; and by that work which he alone was called to perform, and which he declared he had finished. By these, and other articles of distinction, our Lord had, and has, the pre-eminence; and they who believe in him, rejoice and triumph, in the pleasing disparity between
him

him and those he hath redeemed to God by his blood.

Secondly; what positive assistance was granted to the man Christ Jesus, from his union with the Word of God, is not for us to say : reason will not reach the subject, and revelation hath not gratified our curiosity. From the latter, it appears, that he was chiefly, if not entirely, assisted in his obedience, temptations, and sufferings, by the same spirit that helpeth our infirmities. This is evident from the words which have been introduced from the prophecy of Isaiah*. Were more quotations wanting, more might be added to a large amount. But if this fact is admitted, we may infer, that the human nature of Christ, made no change in the person of the Word of God. When he who is so denominated, was made flesh, it was in a manner which produced no confusion between the divine nature and that which he assumed. The flesh to which he was united,

* See Page 84.

continued

continued to be flesh, and was subject to all the laws of our nature in its undefiled state.

If it is difficult to believe, that he who was in the form of God, should be found in fashion as a man, it is more difficult to believe, that a *mere* man, upon his resurrection from the dead, should take upon him the form of God. He that is not God by nature, is not God at all. For the Incarnation of the Son of God, we can assign the strongest reasons. In the light of holy writ, we can say, that the salvation of men, the satisfaction of divine justice, the conservation of true religion, the manifestation of divine mercy, and the hope of our future glory, depended on this great event. But what can unbelievers urge, that he who was a *mere* man, for more than thirty years, what CAN they urge, that he should be *deified* on his resurrection from the dead? Doth the pardon of sin, the government of the world, the exercise of providence, the performance of miracles, the conversion of men, their preservation, the resurrection of the dead, the

the last judgment, the future felicity of believers, or the final condemnation of the wicked, depend on such extravagance? In no wise. Shall we then, ever give up those doctrines which are allowed, to be of difficult interpretation, only to embrace what is at bottom absurd? God forbid!—It is written, that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. May this just and awful sentence, make us very mindful of the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation.

From the manner in which the human nature of Christ was supported in this world, we may further infer, that they who believe in him, may expect to be supplied in the whole of their present conflict, and duty, by the same spirit. This is a pleasing consideration. It awakes their hope, and keeps alive their highest expectations. If we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his. But if that spirit which dwelt in him, dwelleth also in us, what temptation may we not resist? what duty may we not perform?

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It is true, the Father gave not the spirit by measure unto him ; which implies he doth to others ; but if we are an habitation of God, through the spirit, and by his influence mortify the deeds of the body ; if our love, obedience, and strength, are by the power of his *grace*, he that helpeth our infirmities, will grant that measure of it, that will be sufficient for us. Unless we live in this belief, we cannot possess becoming courage ; but on the other hand, we need not tremble, either at our own weakness, or at the most formidable opposition, when we ardently seek, and humbly enjoy, this divine assistance.

In the third place ; the manner in which our Lord attended to relative duties, notwithstanding he was filled with the spirit, is both a pleasing, and instructing trait in his wonderful character. It is well known, how apt, in common, men are to swell on all occasions. Their birth, their family, and parts ; their portion, titles, offices, and I know not what beside, elate their minds, and
contaminate

contaminate their conduct. But, though the birth of Jesus was miraculous, though by his union with the Son of God, he was the Lord from heaven, and appointed heir of all things, though he was wiser than Solomon, and knew that he was the Messiah, yet, in his private life, he was cheerfully obedient to Mary and Joseph; and even unto death, was wonderfully attentive to his mother's welfare.

After such an example, on what pretence can disobedience to parents be defended? Not, it may be said, on the ground of their poverty, but upon the plea of their being vicious. How! *vicious*? Is this true? Take care, young man, how you admit the charge. But if it cannot be denied, do you mean to say, your parents wish their children to be vicious as themselves? (Remember, I am not speaking to the dregs of mankind, but to a Christian congregation.) Suppose the worst; does the young man think his parents were vicious in rocking his cradle, in relieving his numerous wants, in being at the charge

charge of his education, in providing for his future subsistence, and in doing all this, frequently with more pleasure than he received the favour? These surely, are obligations not easy to be discharged; these are benefits which should never be forgotten.—But my parents are defective in understanding.—He that makes this excuse to justify the want of filial obedience, should consider whether he does not underrate the talents of his parents to his own reproach. Perhaps they would not supply the extravagance of him that wanted discretion. Perhaps they justly rebuked him, when his vanity led him to expect their partial applause. Ah! young man, should you live to have a child, and to do as much for it as your parents have done for you, possibly you will then form better notions of domestic wisdom, and of the duties of those who preside in that important station.

Similar pretences have often been made, and taught, to promote disobedience to kings, and to all that are in authority. But
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were these people attentive to the injunctions, or to the example of our Lord, those pretences would perish, and a very different line of conduct would be pursued. But we are told, Christianity has nothing to do with our *civil* behaviour. Now, to refute such pernicious insinuations, you have but to open your New Testament, in order to see whether it does not abound with rules, motives, and examples, on that subject, which no other book can supply. Believe me, if these are despised, or forgotten, ye will at last find, that wiser rules, more noble motives, and better examples, will be sought for without success.

Fourthly; we may observe, that Christ, as a man, was brought up without, what is commonly called, a liberal education. He was not educated at Gamaliel's feet, nor at the feet of any other Rabbi. He was not assisted in his progressive improvements, by any philosopher; nor did the princes of this world take him under their protection. The word of God and prayer were his delight; and

and by these, he obtained that wisdom, and excellence, which never, in any other instance, adorned human nature.

I do not mean to infer from this, what hath too frequently been inferred, that a liberal education is to be despised. But I do mean to infer, it is not essential to human happiness, or to excellence of the highest kind. If they in particular, who are called of God to preach the gospel, were to give themselves up to the reading of his word, and prayer, they would become more able ministers of the New Testament, than by spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not.

I now allude to those courses of study which are magnified so much by some, and so much extolled by others. It is doubtless, very desirable, that some ministers should be acquainted with the scriptures in their original language; but this, so far as it relates to general edification, is, by no means, such an arduous task as some interested tutors are disposed

disposed to represent it. On the other hand, it is idle to imagine, that very important consequences will follow, merely because any man is versed in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek. For others, as learned as himself, will always differ from him in theological opinions; and how are the bulk of mankind to settle the dispute? Besides; every body knows, or may know, that they who have read any part of the scriptures in their own vernacular language, have as grossly misinterpreted the sacred text, as those who were never able to read it, but by the medium of an imperfect translation. Some of the most important controversies now subsisting, are those in which, on both sides, the sacred text is allowed to be well translated.

For my own part, I see no reason why any person who has a taste for theological understanding, should be checked in his pursuit after a critical knowledge of the original text; but if some institutions are very likely to send out the best of pastors, or the best of writers, on religious subjects, it will be to many a pleas-

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ing disappointment.—After all, it is our duty to keep a steady eye on plain facts, and to rejoice in whatever turns out well, though we may not be able to account for what we see. Of one thing, at least, we may be certain, that every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights; with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

We may further observe; that our Lord was not only brought up without what is usually called, a liberal education, but under those outward repulses which were not easy to be surmounted. Yet was he fairer than the children of men. I do not mean, in his form, or natural complexion, of which we have no proof; but in the excellence of his understanding, and in the dispositions of his heart.

There is a hurtful notion widely spread amongst mankind, which is, that nothing great can be expected from the poor and afflicted, or from those who are under the oppressor's

pressor's rod, or beneath the tyrant's frown. This is so far from being true, that not only the best of men have reaped advantage by their distresses, but there is reason to conclude, that without their greatest trials, neither their invention, prudence, nor piety, would have been so considerable, or so conspicuous. Besides; there are virtues which are never visible to us, but in the hours of adversity. As some spices do not emit their odours unless they are bruised; so some of the most excellent graces of Christianity remain, if I may so express it, in their quiescent state, till affliction calls them forth to action, and to excite applause.

In holy writ, the names of many are recorded who became eminent as their trials most of all abounded. The names of Moses, Jacob, Joseph, and Job, are amongst those worthies; and a much larger catalogue may be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In Pagan history, we read of Æsop, Epictetus, and of others, not a few, who have given posterity a higher notion of their inherent

value, than their lords and masters have given us of theirs : and I could mention a long list of excellent men of modern date, who were never stimulated to study by the charms of affluence and ease—who were never soothed to write by the prospect of external indulgence.

Was our Lord then, or was he not, pleased to take upon him the form of a servant, that, among other things to be answered by such amazing condescension, he might encourage us, however tried, to aspire after that excellence which is rarely eminent in the splendid ranks of life ? There is reason to believe this was his kind intention. May we never therefore forget his illustrious example !

Remember he was of no account in the Jewish church or state. His own countrymen received him not. They procured his crucifixion ! and when at the bar of Pilate, who appeared in his favour ? All forsook him and fled. His purity and wisdom indeed, commanded transient admiration ; but could
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not, in that adulterous age, procure his release. Barabbas was preferred, and Jesus rejected ! Remember how he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself ! Think of the magnanimity of his temper : his devotion to his father ; and his compassion towards his persecutors. Call to mind the renown of his sufferings, and the relief and instruction which they impart ; and under every oppression, set that Lord before you, who, in defiance of all that could be formidable, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Any other improvement of this subject than has been made already, must now be comprized in a narrow compass.

We may just observe, that the benefits and blessing of *early* piety are strongly recommended by our Lord's example. Other things being equal, he that is pious in the dew of his youth, will reap the advantage of it, if he is spared, in the withering hours of

old age. But *every* display of the ^{gr}ace of God is glorious ; nor should those who have slighted it long, despair : though it must be owned, that they who have been most of all kept from neglecting their own salvation, have the greatest reason to rejoice.

We must not, however, dictate to God. It is at his option to quicken whom he will, and when it seemeth good in his sight. Let us also remember, that in Christianity, as well as in common life, there is a state of infancy, childhood, youth, and advanced age. In the former, as well as in the latter, we are dependent on God, and subject both to external injuries, and to internal disorders. In the former, as well as in the latter, he that is an infant commonly becomes a child, and he that is a child, wisheth to be a young man, and he that is a young man, equally wisheth to be a father. But all these wishes are right or wrong, as they are or are not, accompanied with resignation to God ; and with a proper use of those means which he
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has appointed for our growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I shall only add, that having been your stated Minister almost twenty years, I see, with pleasure, some young people growing up before me, who from their childhood, have known the holy scriptures; and who are, I trust already, made wise unto salvation. If my annual sermons to them, or any other part of my public labours, have been owned for their good, from the present subject also, I pray God they may derive some additional advantage. AMEN.

S E R M O N V.

ON THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW iii. 13.

THEN COMETH JESUS FROM GALILEE TO JORDAN
UNTO JOHN, TO BE BAPTIZED OF HIM.

WE may be confident, that the baptism of Jesus Christ was not according to the will of man. Bad men ridiculed the solemn transaction, good men have thought it strange, and even John himself forbad him; saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? To this remonstrance our Lord replied, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Baptism is by no means, the only duty of
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which we had no notion, till we found it stated, and enjoined, in the New Testament. No, there are other doctrines, and other duties, of which we had not the remotest apprehension, till we were disposed to sit at our Redeemer's feet, and to receive, with religious submission, his unerring words.

Some, far from being thus disposed, have been prevented by a tenet of which certain philosophers are very fond. They say, that every wise agent always acts in a manner the most direct to answer his own end; and finding many things revealed which will not agree with that simplicity of invention they so much admire, and which, from eminent characters, they have been taught to expect, they are offended; and thus offended, treat with irreverence a book which will not indulge them in their favorite speculations.

How far it may be true, that every wise agent amongst *men*, acts in a manner the most direct to answer his own end, in the construction of some machine, in tilling of the

the ground, in reaping in the harvest, and in some other mechanical, and manual operations, I need not determine. But it may be observed, that to *man*, delay is often dreadful, and expence a burden. When it is otherwise, his actions are not so *direct* as the objection has stated. To apply therefore, this penurious notion to the Almighty, as if HE was altogether like unto *us*, is unwarrantable; and, as such temerity is always offensive to God, it must be injurious likewise to them who indulge this rash opinion.

The works which we undertake, though usually connected with other operations in the scale of our existence, are limited, and of narrow compass; our whole chain of connections is short, and soon surveyed from end to end. How different are the works of God! Who can unfold the extent of his designs! Who can conceive of all the ends he means to answer by *one* positive institution!

The true principle of our religious obedience, is the fear of God; that fear which com-
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prizes the knowledge, reverence, and esteem of him ; and the only rule of such obedience, is his will concerning us ; as it is clearly expressed, or strongly implied. This is always that rule of our religious duty it is extremely criminal in us to renounce, and which it is ever sinful to neglect.

But it requires much more to yield acceptable obedience unto God than is commonly supposed. Unless we are as cautious as we may be sincere, and as watchful, as we may be bold, we are liable to strange mistakes. The Jews, while they made their boast of the law, broke it, and dishonoured God ; and judaizing Christians, have desired to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

That circumspection and prayer, are necessary to the obedience of faith, they best know who are most attentive to the different oeconomies of divine favor, and to the different characters of men, under the patriarchal, jewish, and christian dispensations. In all of them,

them, the will of God has been the invariable rule of religious duty ; but his preceptive will, under each of those dispensations, in some articles of importance, has been disputed ; and they who have erred in these disputes, have commonly connected error with error, till their obedience became partial, superficial, or miserably misplaced.

We may further observe, that when particular commands have been settled without dispute, the *manner* in which they should be regarded, has been strangely overlooked. Yet, in the regular discharge of duty, the manner in which we become obedient, is of no trifling moment. The connection between faith and obedience, between one duty and another, the order which makes our actions excellent, the call that will justify extraordinary steps, and the dependance we should place in God to execute any thing which he approves, calls aloud for our best attention. He who is in the habit of thinking soundly on these things, will never be much elated at his own behaviour ; nor is he
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likely to be thoroughly satisfied with his past, or present conduct.

Baptism was not always a duty ; nor is it now the immediate duty of every man to be baptized. It has, as well as other duties, its own place. It had no existence as a duty, before the preaching of John ; and it is evident, he was not permitted to administer that ordinance according to his own discretion. On the contrary, John was bound to regard his heavenly mission ; and his fidelity in the discharge of his uncommon office, is an example that men of the strictest integrity very much admire.

But though Baptism was not always a duty, though it is not now the duty of infants, or of unbelievers, to be baptized, yet to infer from this, it is only a ceremony which we may either regard, or omit, or that this Christian ordinance is injurious to holy dispositions, or that they who are spiritual need not be baptized in water ; these are inferences as illogical, as they must be offensive to him who
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hath expressly required them that believe, to be baptized in his name.

Still, who are the only proper subjects of this ordinance, is, to the present hour, disputed: and, among other hurtful misimprovements of this debate, one is, that a certain class of people who profess to be good Christians, have long since denied that it is the duty of any person to be baptized. Their error has been again and again refuted; and the source of their mistake repeatedly exposed. But what avails it! They who will not see, elude instruction. Fond of their own light within, argument is either neglected, or derided; and written rules, though they should be found in the New Testament, are not suffered to correct their *superior* understanding.

My sentiments, and my practice, relative to Baptism, are well known to you; and if they were not, ye do not now expect me to make a formal confession of my faith. The text leads me to speak of the Baptism of
Christ;

Christ; and on it, I would observe, first, in what manner he submitted to this ordinance; and, secondly, what ends were to be answered by his submission.

I. I am to say, in what *manner* Jesus Christ submitted to be baptized by John. Here, I shall venture to lay before you the following assertions; not as infallible, but as containing my stedfast belief on this part of the present subject.

1. I may safely assert, that our Lord was baptized by his own *choice*. For he came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. Now, as our Lord never chose to do any thing which it did not become him to prefer, for this fatiguing journey of two days extent, taken of his own accord, and performed on foot, he must have had sufficient reasons: and these, whatever they were, as he could not but clearly discern them, so, it is evident, he was not disposed to set them aside.

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2. It seems to be equally obvious, that when our Lord was baptized, he submitted to that sacred appointment with a fixed *resolution* to regard the will of his heavenly Father. Such a resolution was unavoidable. His condescension, in this instance, might be misinterpreted. People might infer he was inferior to John. He knew also, that they who questioned John's authority to baptize, would disapprove of the sanction of his example. He likewise foresaw, that John himself would seriously object to this instance of his obedience; so that, unless we suppose, that the Messiah well knew it became him to be baptized, we cannot conceive he would have resolved on such submission; and yet we see, without the most deliberate, and determinate resolution, it was not possible for him to have been baptized of John.

3. I will add, that it is sufficiently clear to me, that our Lord was baptized by *immersion*. This perhaps may be attributed to my supposed prejudices in favour of that ancient practice. This, however, is a mistake. For,
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if upon any sound principle it could be proved that sprinkling might be a substitute for immersion, I freely own, I had much rather sprinkle than baptize. But believing it cannot, as I was baptized myself, without consulting flesh and blood in reference to that duty, so, since I have preached the gospel, I have baptized others, and yet continue to baptize, without consulting with my natural sensations, or listening to the suggestions of worldly advantage, or of popular applause.

~ If the meaning of those original *words*, which most of all relate to the mode of Baptism, be sought for, we must allow the Greek nation to possess a clear understanding of those terms. If they do not, we may well despair of finding out in this country, what they have been unable to discern. But how those words are taken by them, their practice of immersion, as a religious rite, for more than seventeen hundred years, strongly evinces. Compared with the loud voice of national decision, on such a subject, and with such obedience, what is the weight of opposite opinions? Na-

tions may err ; but the grounds of their error are not easy to be concealed. When therefore, no reason can be given why a nation should err in its judgment of a few common terms in its own language, surely, they must presume much too much, who imagine that their criticisms should control the decisions of such a nation.

The *place* where our Lord was baptized, affords additional ground to conclude he was baptized by immersion. No man means to be ridiculous in the discharge of his duty, or by doing that which he believes is right. But would it not seem ridiculous if two men were to go into the Jordan, the Thames, the Trent, or the Severn, the one to sprinkle, and the other to be sprinkled with water ?

It cannot be said, that brooks and rivers were antiently chosen to avoid persecution ; since that end was more likely to be answered by sprinkling in a private room, than by baptizing in a public situation. But when
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it is urged, that brooks and rivers, were resorted to, when John, and the Apostles baptized, not with any intention to immerse the candidates in water, but that their cattle, or themselves, might be properly supplied with sufficient quantities of water for other uses; or that they went thither chiefly to give immense crowds an opportunity to approach and see a new sight, it is difficult to believe, that such persons are thoroughly sincere.

The *actions* which are recorded in baptizing the primitive believers, are such as cannot be accounted for, unless we admit they were immersed in water. Of our Lord, it is said, that he came to *Jordan* to be baptized of John; and that when he was baptized, which must have been *in* the river Jordan, he went up straightway *out* of the water. Now, if he came to Jordan, went into that river, and was there baptized, of these *actions* we can give no *adequate* or serious account, if we deny that he was immersed, when he himself submitted to that positive institution.

Neither common sense, nor religion, required a more minute account of those actions which were essential to the baptism of believers, than is recorded in the New Testament. Had we that alone, which is open to inspection in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, it would be abundantly sufficient; provided the reader was not resolved before-hand, to give it no credit: and to such a disposition, the most copious detail must have been in vain.

A justly celebrated commentator, in this country, of the pædobaptist persuasion, overcome with the force of facts, confesses, that the Eunuch was immersed; but one of his literary friends, in a letter lately published, among others better worth our notice, reproves him for his honest concession; and says, I do not see any proof, that the Eunuch was baptized by *immersion*. He adds, Nor do I see reason to think, that John the Baptist, used immersion, but rather otherwise. This gentleman had, it seems, the art of seeing what he pleased upon this subject; and
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when a man is once an adept in that art, arguments are esteemed as straw, and historical narration, as rotten wood.

The *concessions*, however, which learned, and pious, pædobaptists have made in favor of immersion, shew, they were of opinion, that sprinkling could not be supported by any narrative of baptism which is recorded in the New Testament. Their numerous, and unexpected concessions, to a very large amount, have lately been collected, arranged, and improved, with great assiduity, by one of our denomination. But the force of such witnesses, in reference to baptism, lies, in my opinion, in the futility of those arguments which, from their own concessions, they are compelled to urge in defence of their well-known deviation from the practice of John, and of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Their arguments, so far as I am able to understand them, terminate in one point. For they all of them end in this question: Hath the Church, or some person, or some persons in it, a *discretionary* power to alter a positive in-

stitution of Jesus Christ ; provided *they* should be of opinion, that the alteration would be more *useful* than the original practice, or more *agreeable* to the nature, and genius of Christianity ?

On this commodious principle, they have endeavoured to prove, it is more decent, rational, safe, and expedient, to sprinkle, than to immerse. With what success, need not be told : and what strange things have been introduced, and applauded, in religious societies, on the fascinating plea of discretionary power, it is not necessary now to mention.

We have seen, that when Christ was baptized, it was by his own choice, with a fixed resolution to submit to that ordinance, and also, that he was baptized by immersion.

4. I shall only add, that when our Lord was baptized of John, his obedience was entirely under the dominion of a *religious* principle. In the former œconomy, *circumcision* was closely connected with *civil* subjection,
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and terrestrial donations. But Baptism is, by no means, essential to any obedience which is due to kings, or which is peculiar to any mode of civil government. If it is not taught as a religious duty, it is profaned; and if it is not submitted to as a matter of conscience, by him that is baptized, the sacred appointment is either mistaken, or perverted.

John was not the author of this institution. He was sent of God to baptize; and it was a branch of evangelical righteousness in him, to comply with his heavenly mission. The character of Christ, was vastly superior to John's; yet, he was not to baptize, but to be baptized: and knowing this to be the will of his Father, he obeyed; and complied with that, as well as with every other act of righteousness, which it became him to fulfil.

From the religious disposition, and behaviour of our Lord, in this instance of his obedience, we may infer, that if any tincture of religion, which is founded on a belief that God is God, and that he is a re-

warder of them that diligently seek him; if any tincture of this, is essential to baptism, he who is properly baptized, cannot be an infant, or an unbeliever. On the other hand, if they may be baptized who are utterly unacquainted with the nature of religion, there is sufficient reason to conclude, that this indulgence rests on the discretionary power of men, and not on the word of God.

The religious deportment of our Lord, connected with his condescension, when he was baptized of John, deserve our notice. He came from Galilee to Jordan uninvited. He came, not only without ostentation, but without giving notice of his approach. No peculiar indulgence softened his external submission to that ordinance which is not very pleasing to flesh and blood. He was baptized as other people. His conduct in the whole of this business, was charming: but of that kind which only charms them who have just notions of obedience to God, and who desire above all things, to be devoted to his will.

II. Let

II. Let us now consider, what *ends* were to be answered by the Baptism of Christ.

1. One end to be answered by this transaction was, to demonstrate that the Baptism of John was from heaven, and not of men. We cannot doubt whether Christ perfectly understood the nature of John's mission; nor can we believe that it would have met with his approbation, unless it had been divine. To set this in the clearest, and strongest light, was an article of great importance. Much depended on the fact; not only then, but now; for, as that point is settled, so will the character of Christ rise or fall, in human apprehension. Our Lord therefore, by being baptized of John, gave such a proof of John's authority to baptize, as to make it evident, that they who called it in question, and refused to submit to his baptism, rejected the counsel of God against themselves.

2. Another end to be answered by the Baptism of Christ, was to make it manifest
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that he himself was the very Messiah.—Baptism was a *new* religious rite. This, of course, would produce much speculation, and repeated interrogations. It had this effect. The Jews sent Priests and Levites, from Jerusalem, to say unto John, Who art thou? John, conceiving they would take it for granted, that because he baptized, he pretended to be the promised Messiah, confessed, and denied not, but confessed, he was not the Christ. They asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? Art thou that prophet? He answered, No. They further ask, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize in water: but there standeth one among you, whom you know not. He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes latchet I am unworthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Now, from these things, it appears, that Baptism was so far from being founded on
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Jewish customs, that the Jews themselves were of opinion, that, if John was not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet, which they, from their own prophecies, expected, he had no right to baptize: and John, as we have seen, was very far from treating their questions as frivolous. He answered them with great sobriety. I am, said he, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, as said the prophet Isaiah. Which was as much as to say, Though I am not the Messiah, I am his precursor, and am sent to point him out to the house of Israel: and the next day, seeing Jesus coming to him, he cried out, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; and added, This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me, and I knew him not; but that HE should be made *manifest* to Israel, THEREFORE am I come baptizing in water.

This testimony of John was the more to be regarded as he had no personal acquaintance with Christ previous to this time. For
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John was in the desert, till the day of his shewing himself to Israel: probably in the desert of Ziph, or Maon, near to Hebron, But Christ, before his baptism, resided chiefly at Nazareth; so that, when they met at Jordan, John twice says, I knew him not: and adds, but he that sent me to baptize in water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, says John, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

3. Another end to be answered by the Baptism of Christ, was to teach those that did, and them that should believe in him, that his kingdom was spiritual, and was, by no means, to be confined to Judea. The example of our Lord was intended to operate on *individuals*; and when it has its due effect, it is not material where his followers were born, from whom they were descended, or may choose to live. The children of the flesh are not accounted for the seed. In
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his kingdom, they who were afar off, are made nigh by his blood : so that, both Jews and Gentiles, in him, have access, by one spirit, unto the Father. In short, as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for they are all one in Christ Jesus : and if they be Christ's, then, and not otherwise, are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The true nature of the kingdom of Christ was so contrary to the conceptions, and desires of Jews, and Gentiles, that it was needful, in various modes, to be very explicit on this important point. Accordingly, we find, that many parables were spoken, and that many sermons were preached, to convince them his kingdom was not of this world : ancient prophecies also were explained, and such arguments were urged, as had the strongest tendency to produce conviction.

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Among the rest, the manner in which the ordinance of Baptism was *first* administered, contributed very much to give the attentive, right notions of the kingdom of Christ. They saw, even from the Baptism of John, that the unrighteous, and impenitent, could not be acknowledged as proper subjects of that ordinance; and that it was in vain for them to say, We have Abraham to our father. They were plainly told, that the axe was laid to the root of the trees, and that every tree which brought not forth good fruit, would be hewn down, and cast into the fire. The obedience of our Lord confirmed the doctrine of John; and from both, it appeared, that Baptism was a personal concern, on religious principles, and to obtain the answer of a good conscience towards God.

If such was the tendency of this ordinance when it was *rightly* administered, we, who believe this, cannot but lament, that it should have been changed for the worse, in the manner that history attests, and which the common practice of thousands confirm. This
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is the more affecting, as they who have innovated most, like other innovators, attempt to *justify* their own conduct, and hold up others as obstinate, who refuse to submit to their popular decisions.

4. Another end to be answered by the Baptism of Christ was, that he might enter with due solemnity on his public course of action. Never was so much to be done in a little time since the creation, as our Lord had to do in the short interval of his public ministry. The number, the nature, and importance of his mighty, and merciful works, required that he should enter on his public labours with a solemnity that might excite the most sober, and pleasing expectations. What could be more likely to produce this effect, than those circumstances which were closely connected with his being baptized by John? All men held John to be a prophet. Yet, great as John was in their apprehension, and in the sight of the Lord, he confessed he was unspeakably inferior to
Jesus

Jesus Christ. This truth was confirmed from heaven in a very seasonable moment. For Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straitway out of the water; and lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God, descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. What must not be expected from such a beginning! Nor were the highest hopes of believers disappointed. John did no miracle, but all things which John spake of him were true.

5. Another end to be answered by the Baptism of Christ, was, that he himself might be a pattern to his people in all ages, in that act of Christian obedience, which he knew would become sufficiently unpopular to need the sanction of his own example. Yet, even of this consolation, many have endeavoured to rob us; by attempting to prove that Christ was not immersed in Jordan. But, as if they could not rely on the force of their own arguments,

ments, the art of the engraver has been employed to catch the reader's eye, and to correspond with idle criticisms on this serious subject. This is not the only instance, in which a childish fondness for pictures has been hurtful to society. That the finest engravings may exhibit what is opposite to fact, they who are most charmed with them, seldom suspect. If however, we suffer ourselves to be deceived with such things, we are cheaply deceived. For our Lord's example is placed in so clear a light in the New Testament, that if a man had no end whatever in view, but to see it as it is, and to follow what he finds, it may be doubted much if there ever had been any controversy whether he was or was not baptized by immersion.

Where arguments are nearly equal, example is of great influence : but where the best example, and the best of arguments, unite to recommend any branch of Christian duty, what shall we say, if wise and good men are, in that instance, disobedient ? Whatever my betters may be disposed to say on such a

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question,

question, I will venture to assert, that no man is obliged to follow another, further than the object followed is himself a follower of Jesus Christ.

6. I shall only add, that another end to be answered by the Baptism of Christ, was to give that evidence to the truth, and importance, of what is now called, the doctrine of the TRINITY, which, however it may be resisted, is not, by any art, to be set aside.

When our Lord was baptized, he was acknowledged to be the Son of God. The voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. This voice must have proceeded from some one. It did not proceed from the holy Spirit, but from the Father. The Father then, is distinguished from his Son ; and it is equally evident, the Spirit is distinguished from both. For when that voice from heaven was heard, the Spirit of God silently descended like a dove, and rested upon Jesus : he, therefore, could not
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be him on whom he descended, nor yet the Father, from whom the voice proceeded.

Afterwards, when our Lord was risen from the dead, he took occasion, in the final settlement of the ordinance of Baptism, to re-inculcate the doctrine of the TRINITY; and that, in a manner so clear, and with a solemnity so great, that were it the only text in the New Testament which treated of that peculiar article of our belief, it would be a reproach to us who have been baptized, on a public profession of believing its contents, were we afraid, or ashamed, of holding fast, under every opposition, the profession of our faith.

The text to which I refer, is thus introduced: All power, saith our Lord, is given unto me in heaven, and in earth. It is no inconsiderable proof of this fact, that the TRINITY in UNITY, is immediately revealed by him; not enigmatically, but in the clearest manner possible; not in secret, but openly; not to be a matter of mere speculation,

but to be connected with practical submission to a positive institute, and with all things whatsoever he hath commanded ; not for any short season, as introductory to sublimer sentiments, but always, even to the end of the world.

It was with this preface, and in this connection, that our risen Redeemer said to his disciples, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, in the NAME of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.

In this commission, we may observe, that *teaching* takes the lead ; and that they who were to teach others, had been taught of God. It was not what they had invented, but what they had received, which they were commissioned to communicate to mankind. Next, we may observe, that their commission was extended to *all nations*. But it is evident, not that all in all nations were to be baptized, not that any in any nation, while untaught, were to be baptized, but only those who

who, in all nations, were so taught as to believe in the Son of God.

It further appears, from the same commission, that this was to be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But where the name is but ONE, the nature can be NO MORE. However, though the nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the SAME; yet their relation to each other, and to us, IS NOT. If I say, in baptizing a believer, I baptize thee in the name of the FATHER; I pause, and ask, May I add any other agent? Yes, saith my commission, add the SON. I do this, saying, and of the Son. Again I pause, and ask, may I yet add another agent to the Father and the Son? Yes, saith my commission, add the HOLY GHOST. I make this addition, and find my commission is completely closed.

These questions produce the following. Why THREE agents under ONE name, if there were not SO MANY? Or why not MORE, if there had been a greater number? Again,

if we believe that the Father is a *person*, must we not, to be *consistent*, believe, that the Son, and Holy Ghost, are *persons*? Further; if we believe, the Father is a person truly *divine*, must we not, to be *consistent*, believe, that the Son, and Spirit also, are truly divine persons? Who but such dare we *thus* to connect with the FATHER?

Should it be said, that from being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we are not to infer the unity of their nature, but their joint authority; even by this concession we must suppose them to be three distinct persons: because authority and personality are inseparably connected. Authority, however, is either finite, or infinite. That which is *finite* may be divided, and possessed in different degrees to make up the whole. But if there be no degrees in infinity, he that is infinite in his nature cannot divide his supreme authority with finite beings. There must therefore, in the present case, be *three* persons truly divine; who, being by nature, *one* JEHOVAH, require that homage of

of the heart, and prostration of the body, in them who believe, and are baptized, which produces one of the most solemn acts of worship which is performed in this world : and as this act is not to be repeated, why are we blamed for taking all the care we can, that it should be done as the Lord our God hath commanded ?

I could, with pleasure, enlarge ; but perhaps, in the opinion of some, I have spoken already too freely, and too much. Were I, however, convinced of this, I would make reasonable concessions ; but nothing short of those arguments I cannot answer, or that authority I have no right to resist, will make me revoke my present opinions. If they have not been stated with all that precision which the subject requires, or with that good temper which might have been expected, yet I trust the attentive will make out my meaning : and, if I may say so much, I believe, that they who differ from me in judgment, must be very partial, if they should think that this discourse is more defective in point of

temper, than some they have admired on the other side of the question.

May ye, my brethren, always remember in whose NAME, and to what ENDS, ye have been baptized, and while ye endeavour to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded you, may ye never forget his animating promise;—Lo ! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world, AMEN.

SERMON VI.

S E R M O N VI.

ON THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW iv. 1.

THEN WAS JESUS LED UP OF THE SPIRIT INTO THE
WILDERNESS, TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

N O sooner was our Lord baptized, and that voice from heaven heard, which raised in some the highest expectations, than he was missing; but whither he was gone for more than forty days, it is probable, that neither the Baptist, nor any of his disciples, nor Joseph, nor even Mary, knew.

Of his sudden departure, Mark hath given us this account : And immediately, the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness, and he was there in the wilderness, forty days,
tempted

tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts ; and the angels ministered unto him.

The Spirit by whom our Lord was conducted into the wilderness, is sufficiently distinguished from that artful adversary who was eager to meet him there. By an internal impulse from this holy Spirit, instead of going up to Jerusalem, or back again to Nazareth, our Lord walked on towards the wilderness of Judea, musing, no doubt, of great events. Some have thought, from Mark's account of this transaction, that our Lord was caught away from Jordan in a manner similar to the rapture of Philip the Evangelist, after he had baptized the Eunuch ; but others are not able to perceive the least foundation for that conjecture.

It may not here, be amiss to remark, that the strongest *internal* impulses of the holy Spirit, are not, in the least, injurious to human liberty ; because they are the impulses of *illumination*. But if light, when it is most abundant to produce conviction, prevents
the

the freedom of our choice, it must, as it descends, in every inferior degree, obstruct it; allow this, and it will follow, that in order to be free, we should prefer this sentiment to that, while we are in the dark, and are unable to discern the least difference between the two. A notion surely, not likely to be adopted by persons of common understanding.

Though the first scene of our Lord's temptation was in the wilderness, it was afterwards shifted to the holy city; and, lastly, removed to an exceeding high mountain; but by what name that mountain was called, or where it stood, we are not informed. Be where it might, on that mountain, as well as in the wilderness, and on the wing of the temple, Satan, in every shifting scene, was more than disappointed.

Let us now take some notice of him who is called the Tempter; and afterwards, glance at each of those temptations which are closely connected with the words of our text.

I. The

I. The Tempter, in the chapter before us, is frequently said to be the DEVIL. This unpleasing name hath long since become so vulgar in our language, that it seldom occurs in sober speech. But of that malignant being, he who knew him best, thought fit to say, that he was a murderer from the beginning; that he abode not in the truth; that there is no truth in him; that when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; that he is a liar, and the father of it. The names and the title given to this miserable being, in the scripture, are expressive of his nature and employ. From those names we learn, that he is an accuser, a slanderer, and foe to God and man; by his title, which is, THE TEMPTER, we are informed, that seduction is his business,

How many he seduced on his first revolt, is to us unknown; but that he seduced Eve; that Eve was not content to transgress alone; that being beguiled herself, she succeeded in contaminating our federal head, and that by the fall of Adam, his whole posterity have
been

been exposed to the seductions of Satan, and will be thus exposed to death; all this is abundantly revealed. The best of men are so far from being exempted from Satan's temptations, that he is eminently their adversary. One of them, who knew this to his cost, said to his select companions, Be sober, be vigilant; because *your* adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

What the Scriptures report of Satan, is the more alarming, since they inform us, he is not alone in his apostacy; but that innumerable associates are combined with him as adversaries to God and man; and they permit us to conclude, that beside those invisible agents, there are multitudes amongst mankind, who walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit who still worketh in the children of disobedience.

I am aware, that they who believe these things, and openly confess their belief, are
laughed

laughed at for their supposed credulity. But, may I ask, by *whom*? It seems strange, that they who most resemble Satan in his diabolical nature, should most of all be disposed to be offended when they hear of his influence; yet that there is some truth in this observation, is too evident to be disputed. Of late, his existence hath not only been denied, but with so much wit, that the sentiment is like enough to become a fashionable tenet. But he that fears God, as the scriptures have directed, is born to be out of fashion where such sceptical notions are admired; and he feels himself undaunted at such disgrace.

If, as some philosophers assért, we have no knowledge of any thing which did not enter by the medium of our senses, what *knowledge* can we pretend to have of the world of spirits? If of that world, we really have no knowledge, we must either dismiss the subject, or be content with *belief*. It would, however, be ridiculous to believe any thing of evil spirits, which is not carefully founded, on the word of God; but till something
better

better can be produced, why should we be ashamed to credit what is there revealed of any part of the invisible world?

II. Having said these things of the Tempter, let us now glance at each of those temptations which are closely connected with the words of our text.

The FIRST temptation is thus related:— And when he [Christ] had fasted forty days, and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungry. And when the Tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Christ had probably been molested with the secret suggestions of Satan, from his first entering into the wilderness. But now it seems, some suitable form was assumed, to add weight to this bold injunction. Whether the form which Satan assumed, carried in it the air of dignity, or of deep distress, we are not told. Whatever it was, these words, If thou be the Son of God, were
made

made the basis of this temptation. Take them thus, SEEING thou art the Son of God ; then it will follow, that if our Lord had complied with the insolent injunction, he had not treated his audacious adversary with becoming contempt. But it is more probable, Satan meant to suggest, that Jesus was not the Son of God, and that his present situation, and supposed deficiency to supply his pressing wants, afforded ample evidence of that insinuation.

To this insult, our Lord replied, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone ; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The written text which our Lord produced, was taken from the book of Deuteronomy ; and when the place from which it was selected, is carefully surveyed, it seems as if his answer was to this effect : Israel was in a wilderness, dreadful as this, and without bread, for forty years. They were suffered to hunger, but afterwards supplied with manna ;
that

that they might know, that man doth not live by bread only ; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. For Moses gave them not that bread from heaven, but my Father ; who will, when it is proper, supply my present wants ; and that too, in such a manner, as to make it manifest I am his Son.

Much more than this, some imagine, was included in our Lord's reply ; but not being able to discern what they have asserted, I proceed to the SECOND temptation.

Of IT, we thus read : Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple ; and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down ; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee ; and, in their hands, they shall bear thee up, least, at any time, thou dash thy foot against a stone.

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accounted

accounted for, that some have thought the Evangelist speaks, not of a literal remove, but only of a visionary scene. Were that admitted, or could it be proved, that nothing more was intended by Matthew than to give us a narrative of a dream, yet for that dream there must have been a sufficient cause; but who can account for this supposed dream, any more than for the real removal of the body of Christ? and who can inform us why his religious character should be as well preserved in this dream, as if he had been thoroughly awake?

Dreams are strange things. Common as they are, no theory of them has yet been presented to the public which meets, or which is like to meet, with general approbation. It may, however, be observed, that it is easy to distinguish those objects, and agents, which appear to us, in our sleep, from ourselves, and from those effects which they produce in our minds. If, in any of our slumbers we suffer those evils which we could neither fly from, nor resist, when we awake, our painful

ful feelings, give way to grateful sensations ; we thank God it was but a dream. But if in those unguarded moments, we have done those things with pleasure, which when awake we should think it very criminal to do, though when we rise, we may still say, It was but a dream ; yet we must allow, that a dream of this description, differs much from the preceding ; and, I am afraid, that such dreams contain stronger proofs of our depravity than are seriously regarded. When the prince of this world approached unto Christ, whether it was in his waking, or in his sleeping moments, he found he had nothing in him ; but in us, we have reason to believe, he ever finds something favourable to his own interest ; nor should any evidence of that fact be treated with derision and contempt.

It must not be inferred from any of these remarks, that I give up, as indefensible, the literal account of this temptation. By no means. There is, in this case, no necessity to depart from that opinion which is common : and he that would dissent from others on se-

rious subjects, without a sufficient reason, is not more singular, than he is reprehensible for the hurtful tendency of his singularity.

Could, indeed, the literal sense of this text be proved to be absurd, it would be our duty to give it up. But if we admit the existence of evil spirits, who will tell us exactly, what they can or cannot do? It is enough for us to know, let their powers be what they may, that they cannot do any thing which is truly miraculous; and that they cannot compel us to do any thing which is mischievous, or offensive unto God.

In the temptation which is now before us, Satan made no attempt to throw down the Son of God from the summit of the temple. Such an action exceeded the limits of his permission, and was equally inconsistent with his malevolent design. His object was to seduce Christ to do something unworthy of himself; and however, by any medium, he may alarm, or allure mankind, HURT THY-
SELF,

SELF, is, to every individual, the final end of all his temptations.

Our Lord had said, in his first reply to Satan, It is written; and here those words are retorted, and perverted. Cast thyself down, said Satan, for, It is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee. This perversion of the text, our Lord exposes, not by saying it is unfairly quoted, and improperly applied, (which, however, was the fact,) but by observing, It is written AGAIN, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Happy had it been for thousands, who have resisted unto blood, if their tempters, and tormentors, that loudly urged upon them, It is written, had but considered what answer Christ returned to Satan when that adversary produced a written text to countenance the worst of crimes. Had these rash people but considered, It is written AGAIN, it might have produced a careful comparing one part of the sacred writings with another, and have led them to the true sense of those

things which they only fancied they understood. But the scripture must be fulfilled; and this among others: Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Where quotations are important, from the authority of the writings from whence they are selected, care should be taken that they are in *point*, and that nothing is urged from any text which it will not bear, or which is inconsistent with the present œconomy of grace. Our ablest lawyers, in their legal pleadings, are most exact in their appeals to written reports. But it is one of the felicities of the gentlemen at the bar, to plead in the presence of accurate judges; whereas many who are permitted to step into pulpits, seem to take it for granted, that their quotations will not be canvassed, that their arguments will not be inspected, nor their sermons ever become the subjects of sober examination.— There are, however, preachers who never dream

dream of such indulgence ; but always suppose that some of their hearers are not deficient in religious understanding ; who rejoice in that belief, who wish to be approved by such judges, and who are neither elated by extravagant praise, nor dejected by impertinent reproofs.

The THIRD temptation is stated thus :— Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down, and worship me.

Of this exceeding high mountain, the ancients have wisely said but little. But some of the moderns, with less of reverence for the silence of the sacred scripture, have said a great deal too much. For my own part, I will neither venture to give it any name, nor question where it stood, or what might be its form.

To assert, that by all the kingdoms of the world, the Roman empire is alone intended, is destitute of wit, and without a grain of wisdom. For all the kingdoms of the world might as well be shewn in a moment's time, as the Roman empire. The fact seems to have been this; that the body of Christ was again removed, and now, from the pinnacle of the temple to some very high mountain, to give the greater air of probability to a deceptive exhibition. This deception, however daring, was consistent enough with the horrid proposition it was intended to introduce.

All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. What could be more audacious or absurd? To be sure, there is nothing which depraved minds covet more strongly than external dominion. Only in the THRONE, said Pharaoh to Joseph, will I be greater than thou. But what a foolish proposition was the offer of every earthly throne to Jesus Christ, whose kingdom was
not

not of this world—especially by such an agent, and on such a *promising* condition!

That the devices of Satan are sometimes fraught with surprising sagacity, must be admitted; but that our great adversary is sometimes as foolish as he is wicked, I cannot doubt. Revelation allows us to suppose it, and when we consider against whom his wrath is kindled, it is rational to suppose, that some of his schemes would be full of infatuation.

Yet, however it has happened, the common notion is, that there is no want of light, of order, and of unanimity, among wicked spirits. But how does this appear? I will venture to say, for this popular imagination, there is not one argument it would not be easy to answer. The same fallacy has been applauded when applied to wicked men. For it has been supposed, that the servants of Satan are always as shrewd as they are prophane. But those who have sold themselves to work wickedness, however they have been
set

set up, have always been as silly in some of their capital pursuits, as in other instances of their opposition to religious wisdom, they have been sagacious.

In proportion as I find any man to be very wicked, I expect to find him very foolish; and the nearer he approaches to the diabolical nature, the more I am confident, that his absurdities must be such as cannot be very long concealed.

To this last insult of the DEVIL, our Lord instantly replied, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Satan, being thus rebuked, departed; vanquished indeed, but in nothing mended by the just rebuke.

After this victory, and Satan's retreat from the Son of God, it is said, Behold, angels came, and ministered unto him. This undoubtedly they did with the greater pleasure, as they themselves had resisted the same seducer,

seducer, when other angels had been deceived by him into the inextricable abyss of disobedience. We see, that neither poverty, nor the worst of temptations, made the Elect angels reluctant to wait on him that was victorious. Let us rejoice, that for his sake, they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

Having thus glanced at those temptations which our Lord effectually surmounted, the following *miscellaneous* remarks will bring us to the close of this discourse.

I. In each of these temptations, the malice of the Tempter seems to be equally levelled at the Father and the Son. For, in the first of them, Christ was tempted to despair of parental protection. In the second, to presume upon it. In the third, to forget his father's glory; or, rather, to transfer it to the worst of Beings.

II. The importance of Christ's being the Son of God, appears in a strong light, from
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the manner in which he was tempted to doubt of that fact, or to disgrace himself in that distinguished condition. The enmity of Satan was fired at the apprehension. He knows, that religion is founded on relation ; and that only as the latter subsists, and is enjoyed, will the former be regarded, and esteemed. His enmity descends to those who are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ ; nor is there any temper he so much endeavours to destroy, as the spirit of adoption. While that spirit continues, the Father of all our mercies must be adored, and he that would prevent it is abhorred. Consider how much depends on filiation. If children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. But if not children, where is our inheritance ? What is our victory ? and what our conversation ?

III. Though Christ was the Son of God, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered : and, from his preparatory exercises, his future greatness might have been predicted. He did not appear to John till he was fully

fully ripe for that solemn interview. When he was baptized, he was not elated by the voice which proclaimed his glory, nor eager to reap immediate applause. On the contrary, we have seen, that he retired into the wilderness ; not as a *monk*, to lead an inactive life, or to draw after him a deluded crowd ; for the people knew not whither he was gone ; no, he went thither to face his most formidable adversary in secret, to resist his repeated efforts, and after conquest, to return, and to live and die in public, as Jesus Christ the righteous ; and as such, to be the only advocate who should, in every age, save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him.

Our Lord obtained a double triumph over Satan. One in secret, and one upon the cross. Both were glorious, but it is by his atonement that believers joy in God, and receive strength to follow his example. Paul was fully convinced of this, when he said, God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world :

world : and with this conviction, he was so far from being negligent of his own spiritual improvement, that he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ; and that too, with such holy vigor, that he could say, without a blush for his being so bold, Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.

IV. Though there is much in the character of Christ which was never intended for our imitation, yet in the present view of it, there are those things which must be regarded, if we hope to rise above indiscreet applause. For instance, his repeated retirements from the world, his acquaintance with the scripture, his addiction to prayer, his neither seeking, nor declining temptation, his conquest over those that approached him while he was led of the Spirit, the simplicity of his intention, ever directed to the glory of his Father, his courage always to pursue what he knew to be a part of his mission, whatever others thought, or said, of his behaviour ;

haviour; these things were essential to his future fame; and it is certain, that none can be very famous in the church of God, at any less expence.

By what spirit then are they led, who rush upon the public, as ministers of Christ, while they are at once unqualified to teach, and unwilling to be taught? If ye meet with such men, either denying the promised assistance of the holy Spirit, or ascribing unto him the worst of errors, or the worst of tempers, beware! Such men are confined to no religious party: they may be found where ye least expect them, and sometimes, they will not be found in the most suspicious situations.

V. I shall only add, that a remark which some reputable pædobaptists have made on this period of our Lord's temptations, seems to be more inconsistent than might have been expected. Observe, say they, that temptations usually follow baptism, the beginnings of spiritual life, and covenants made with God. Such are the words of one celebrated Commentator,

tor, and others speak to the same effect. But I cannot conceive, how they who contend for the sprinkling of infants, who act on that notion, and call it baptism, should exhort their readers to observe these things. For what temptations immediately follow that aspersion of infants which they enjoin? What beginnings of spiritual life does the sprinkled child enjoy? or what covenants does it make with God?

To how many conflicts *believers* may be exposed, after publicly owning their confidence in Christ, and being baptized in his name, is another question: and what consolations they may derive from his temptations, and from his ability to succour them that are tempted, is a pleasing consideration. That many pædobaptists are eminently endowed with spiritual blessings is undisputed; but none are blessed in such abundance as to be exempt from mistake; nor is any mistake the better, because it gains the sanction of the learned, the esteem of the pious, or the vote of the multitude from age to age.

To

To conclude; temptations to real Christians are unavoidable. They may say to God, Lead us not into the power of temptation; but they cannot pray in faith, never to meet with temptation, affliction, or death. Nor need they wish for such indulgence. It is enough for them to know, that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called, according to his purpose. It is enough for them to believe, that if their temptations are manifold, they are limited; that if they produce heaviness, it is only for a season, and if need be; and, that the grace of Christ is, and ever will be sufficient for them. May that grace be with all our spirits! AMEN.

S E R M O N VII.

ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

LUKE iv. 14.

AND JESUS RETURNED IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT
INTO GALILEE; AND THERE WENT OUT A FAME
OF HIM THROUGHOUT ALL THE REGION ROUND
ABOUT.

THOUGH the human nature of Christ was possessed of that degree of excellence which no man but himself ever enjoyed, yet, not to the limited, and dependent excellence of that nature, but to the power of the Spirit, are his mightiest works ascribed.

By the holy Spirit he was led into the wilderness, and there became victorious; and, still led by the same Spirit, he returned, not
to

to Jerusalem, but into Galilee ; from whence, as we have seen, he came to John to be baptized.

In Galilee, he was to begin his public ministrations, and there, his first miracles were to be wrought ; and from thence, were his Apostles, in general, to be called. It was not, therefore, a natural love to the place of his private education, which drew him back to that obscure abode ; but a divine impulse, in order to fulfil that prophecy which he alone was born to accomplish.

Isaiah had said, The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light ; they that dwell in the shadow of death, upon them hath light shined. These things said Isaiah of Galilee of the nations ; and these things were fulfilled, when Christ taught in their synagogues, preached to them the gospel of his kingdom, and healed all manner of disease among the people.

By thus fulfilling what Isaiah had predicted,

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there went out a fame of him, throughout all the region round about. Well it might. For what could be famous, if that which Christ did, and taught, was not? But his fame was, by no means, to be confided to a single region, country, or nation. It was to fly to the ends of the earth, and to flourish when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Even while he lived in Judea, his fame so increased that his enemies said, This man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and, since his death, and resurrection, it is evident, that God hath given him a name, which is above every name; that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

Of the *teaching* of Christ, we are to take some notice of the following discourse; this therefore, shall be chiefly confined to those miraculous operations of our Lord, by which his fame was inevitably spread abroad.

But

But let us FIRST consider what a miracle is; and then, what may be ASSERTED of the miracles of Jesus Christ.

I. What a miracle is, I have already ventured to give my opinion*. But it is very difficult to produce such a definition of a miracle as shall be liable to no exception. Something redundant, or defective, is, perhaps, unavoidable in every verbal definition of a miracle: and, I am afraid, in most of those verbal definitions which so frequently occur, on all sorts of subjects. But on the present, it may be sufficient to say, that a real miracle is an event which cannot be accounted for, either by the operation of the known general laws of nature, or by ascribing the miracle to any finite Being, or to any thing which has been huddled up under the name of chance.

A learned foreigner is of opinion, that miracles are of two distinct orders. Those of

* See page 63.

the *first* order, he thinks are miracles in the strictest sense of the term, or unusual supernatural effects, which were only produced by the ALMIGHTY ; and, by their being *unusual*, he supposes, they are sufficiently distinguished from other supernatural effects, which, being frequent, are not, in his opinion, to be considered as miracles. Those of the *second* order, he says, are effects which cannot be produced by us, though they may be produced by creatures of a superior rank ; and, in proof this proposition, he quotes several passages of scripture.

But to this account, I have two objections. First, miracles would not cease to be miracles, were they ever so frequent : because the sphere of a miracle is of no great extent ; and therefore, however repeated, the extraordinary operation would still be distinguished from the wide-surrounding, and common course of things. Secondly, the scriptures which the learned author has produced for miracles of a second sort, are such as do not
 speak

speak of real miracles*; and whatever is called a miracle in condescension to popular belief, must not pass for argument on this serious subject.

But the better to conceive what a miracle is, let us consider *on what* miracles are wrought, and *to whom* the stupendous power of performing what is *truly* miraculous, may be safely ascribed.

1. It is clear, miracles are only wrought on that which is *created*. But all that God hath created, all at least that we have heard of, is MATTER and MIND.

If there be any thing miraculous wrought on *material* agents, this supposes a known, and settled course of nature, governed by those laws which the ALMIGHTY hath established and preserves; and the miracle consists in a real, and evident deviation from those laws; for where there is no deviation

* Deut. xiii. 1. John v. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 9.

from the laws of nature, or no evidence of the fact, whatever else may be done which seems to us surprising, certainly, nothing *miraculous* hath taken place.

If there be any thing miraculous wrought on *spiritual* agents, such as the minds of men, this supposes a known, and settled course of depravity in those minds, in consequence of the first man's first offence; and the miracle consists in destroying the dominion of sin in those minds, and introducing there the dominion of grace; so that where sin reigned unto death, grace now reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord,

But they who are reluctant to magnify that grace which bringeth salvation, deny there is any thing miraculous in *regeneration*; not because it is an event which frequently occurs, but because they believe there is nothing *supernatural* in that important change.

Others, however, as learned, and as pious

as they, are of opinion, that no adequate cause can be assigned of spiritual life in sinful men, if the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, in quickning those who were dead in trespasses and sins, is denied. They argue thus: that regeneration cannot proceed from the antecedent state of the human mind, since that is enmity to God. They add, it cannot be effected by moral suasion; because, that is of no force when it does not meet with corresponding internal principles, in them that listen to it; and they affirm, that regeneration is represented in such a manner, in the sacred scripture, as will, by no means, allow us to suppose, that it may be attributed to the most swasive speeches of our fellow men. For, in holy writ, regeneration is represented as a new creation, as circumcision made without hands, as taking away an heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh, and writing in it the laws of God. In the same inspired volume, the efficient cause of regeneration is compared with that mighty power by which our Lord rose from the dead: and
from

from all this, they who argue thus, conceive that IT may be be called MIRACULOUS.

I would not, however, be anxious for the use of this term in this connection. If it is allowed there is something really *supernatural* in regeneration, sanctification and the perseverance of the saints, the scripture account of our effectual calling will be religiously revered ; but if that is denied, I am apprehensive, it cannot be from any sound principle, and that it is not likely to answer any valuable end.

Some have supposed we should be sufficiently guarded from deceptions on this subject, if the final *cause* of miracles were attentively considered. But whether we are always competent to judge of this, I doubt. If, however, a miracle is wrought as the CREDENTIAL of a messenger coming from God with some general revelation to man, or to SECURE THE VERACITY of God's revealed word, against an impious power employing
its

its authority with a declared or professed purpose, to convict the divine declaration of falshood, or if the SUBJECT of the miracle makes so ESSENTIAL a part in the œconomy of the revealed dispensation, as that without the miracle, the whole must fall to the ground*, it must be confessed that such miracles are worthy of the divine Being.

2. Having seen *on what* miracles are wrought, and by that, what a real miracle is, let us now observe *to whom* they may be safely ascribed. For if the existence of miracles is admitted, there must be some agent who is able to produce them, and to whom such stupendous power properly belongs.

Who, then, is HE? Had not folly and prejudice thrown loads of rubbish in our way, the answer might be direct, and plain. And as the case now stands, I shall at present treat all that rubbish as if it had no existence, and say, that the *real* power of per-

* See Bishop Warburton on Miracles.

forming

forming miracles can only be safely ascribed unto God. As it is God ALONE who spreadeth out the heavens ; so it is God alone who doeth great wonders.

If there are other agents who have an inherent power to perform miracles, they must be angels, good or bad ; men, righteous or wicked ; or the man Christ Jesus.

1. Angels, good or bad, have no inherent power to work miracles. It is said, indeed, of angels, that they excel in strength ; yet if their strength is wholly *intellectual*, as some learned men have supposed, that, it seems, gives them no dominion over the least particle of matter. For, by mere intellectual endowments, we cannot conceive that it would be less difficult for angels to remove a mountain than to remove an atom.

Good angels, it must be acknowledged, have often been employed, as *instruments*, in miraculous operations ; both in a way of judgment, and mercy. So also was Moses ;
and,

and, for any thing we know to the contrary, Moses contributed as much to the production of his miracles, by stretching out his rod, as the angels did to the performance of any miracle, by their appearance, volition, or by any action that is ascribed unto them.

Evil angels likewise, have sometimes been used, as *instruments*, in miraculous operations; as Satan, in some of the calamities which were brought on Job. But why should we think, from the afflictions of that upright man, that his adversary was the subject of a power sufficient to raise a storm, to produce lightnings, or to strike, at his pleasure, the bodies of men with pestilence, or with any any other disease? Job's affliction is no proof of such power in Satan; for that righteous man, more than once, acknowledged, that his great affliction was from the hand of God.

But, the most extravagant notions have been formed of demons, good and bad, and of the doctrines of, or concerning devils;
and

and, indeed, of magicians, magnetists, and other impostors; notions, which have been very injurious to those who have given heed to *seducing* spirits. Yet, why all this extravagance? If angels act upon matter, it must be either by *volition*, or in consequence of some *vehicle* they are supposed to assume. Of these vehicles, we *know* nothing; and we do well to *believe* very little of what ingenious men have said of them. As to volition, there is but ONE BEING whose WILL IS POWER: therefore, no man can prove that a thousand volitions of a thousand angels, could raise a feather, or prevent a single atom from falling to the ground*.

Milton's angels, indeed, would tear up mountains by their roots, imitate thunder, and make dreadful havock in the works of God. But Milton was a poet. Fiction, the spirit of poetry, was his delight; yet, however we may admire his invention, we are not, I hope, so enchanted with it, as to

* Rev. Mr. JOHN BRINE.

think,

think, that imagination and truth ought to be confounded.

After all, since we knew so little of the manner in which angels can, or cannot act, and, as many wonderful things seems to be ascribed unto them in scripture, (miracles excepted, in the strictest sense of that term,) it does not become us positively to assert what, with the divine permission, it is impossible for them to perform.

2. If angels have no inherent power to perform miracles, we may be confident men are not endowed with such ability. Nothing can be more pleasing, or more in point, on this subject, than the artless language of Peter, when, by a miracle, he and John had restored a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, to immediate, and perfect strength.

As the recovered cripple held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them, in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly

ly wondering ; when Peter saw it, he said to the people, ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power, or holiness, we had made this man to walk ? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus,—and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know ; yea, the faith which is *by* him, as well as *in* him, hath given him who was born lame, this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

After this declaration, the rulers, elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem ; and asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this ? THEN Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we be this day examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole,

whole, Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by HIM, doth this man stand here before you whole.

It hath been said, Nothing is permanent but truth, and nothing consistent but sincerity* ; and, if the amiable features of sincerity and truth, do not meet the reader's eye in the report of Peter's unpremeditated defence, where, or when he will ever perceive such excellence, I cannot imagine.

As what has been said sufficiently proves that *good* men have no inherent powers to perform a miracle, it would be idle to suppose, that *bad* men are possessed of such endowments.

3. It only remains to be considered whether Christ, AS MAN, had an inherent power to work miracles.

* White's Sermons at Oxford in 1784.

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Nothing like this appears from his own testimony of himself; but the reverse. For, to Philip, he said: The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father, that dwelleth in me, HE doth the works. On the day of Pentecost, Peter and others, entered into the spirit of this assertion. Addressing the multitude then at Jerusalem, who were amazed at the gift of tongues, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Peter said, Ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and signs, WHICH GOD DID BY HIM, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know, — This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

From this account it appears, that the *human will* of Christ, had not sufficient efficacy to produce miraculous operations. His miracles

racles were the effect of the *divine will*. It was his Spirit, or the divine nature, (common to the Father and to himself as the Son of God,) that quickened; his flesh, or human nature, profited nothing. Nicodemus, therefore, argued rightly, when he said to Christ, Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God, for *none*, neither man, nor angel, CAN do these miracles which thou dost, except God be with him.

But, to this view of things, it is objected, that if none have any inherent powers to work miracles, but the ALMIGHTY, how are we to account for those miracles which *seem* to be wrought by other agents; especially those which are ascribed to the magicians who withstood Moses in the land of Egypt?

Were we frankly to say, we are unable to answer this objection to general satisfaction, where would be our disgrace? For, if we may hold, and propagate no position, till we can answer all that is urged against it, to the entire satisfaction of them who are disposed

to dispute what it affirms, we are in an evil situation ; since, if we are to be thus limited, we must give up the greatest part of our sentiments, both civil and religious.

But the case of the magicians may be stated thus : Moses attempting to prove his divine mission by miracles, found, as God had told him he would, that Pharaoh was very slow of heart to admit, that what he did was truly miraculous. When therefore Aaron, at the command of Moses, cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent, THEN Pharaoh called the wise men, and sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt, and they also did in like manner with their incantments : that is, that they made use of their incantments to do as Moses did ; and succeeding, it was natural enough in them to ascribe their success to their own arts. Moses had been brought up amongst them in Egypt ; and though they probably allowed he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and deeds, yet, what could he know which they

they could not understand? What could he perform which they could not effect? This, it seems, was not only the opinion of the magicians themselves, but also of Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened by their success. A second, and a third time, these magicians withstood Moses, and still succeeded. At length, the Lord said to Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice, throughout all the land of Egypt. And THEY did so: for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt: and the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there was lice upon man, and upon beast. THEN the magicians said to Pharaoh, THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD!

The word which is here translated God, is not JEHOVAH, but ELOHIM. Now, as the word JEHOVAH was that name by which the

Almighty would be known in Israel *after* this event, when the sons of Abraham and Jacob, under their theocratic state, were to look up to him as their God and King, and in that *use* of the term, it was of much later date than the word ELOHIM, which was the *first* name by which God made himself known to man; as this is the fact, it is natural to suppose that the magicians had a greater veneration for the word ELOHIM than for the word JEHOVAH. From this fact, therefore, we may infer, that when they said to Pharaoh, THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD! they did in effect say to him, This miracle is not wrought by any *tutelary*, local, or inferior deity, (of which they supposed there were many,) but by him who made the heavens and the earth, and before whose almighty power every other Being is compelled to bow.

But there is no reason to restrain the confession of the magicians to the miracle of turning dust into lice, which in truth, is no greater miracle than the preceding two: no, their confession seems to have been as extensive as
it

it was sincere. It amounts, in my opinion, to this: We are now convinced, that neither Moses, nor ourselves, have any real power to work miracles; and we believe, that in ALL this business the power of the ELOHIM hath been manifested: it is therefore to no purpose any longer to question the mission of Moses, or to resist the SUPREME AUTHORITY under which *we* are convinced he acts.

Such, I think, were their sentiments. Should you be of a different opinion it is no great matter. If, however, you think it strange, that God should work a miracle at the request of the magicians, or while they were using their enchantments, wherein, I would ask, is this more wonderful than that the Lord should put a word into Balaam's mouth, and say, Return to Balak, and thus shalt thou speak, at the very moment he was using his enchantments to curse the sons of Jacob; and that too, because he loved the wages of unrighteousness? Endeavour, if you please, to distinguish between the request of the magicians, and the *end* to be answered by

the final issue of those mighty works which were done in the presence of Pharaoh. It was not only against that haughty tyrant, but against ALL the *gods* of Egypt that JEHOVAH resolved to execute judgment; and when he had done it, Moses in his song of triumph said, Who is like unto thee, O LORD, amongst the *gods*? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!

In the three first miracles, though the faith and patience of Moses might be tried, yet was he not left without sufficient witness, that even in those miracles, it pleased God to make a clear distinction between what was done at his word, and what followed the enchantments of Jannes and Jambres; or who ever else they were that withstood him to his face. For though upon their enchantments, their rods were changed into serpents, yet Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods; though they, by the power of God, turned water into blood: they were not permitted to reverse the wonder, and turn blood into water;

ter; though, by the power of God, they produced frogs, they were not suffered to remove them from the presence of Pharaoh. Yet notwithstanding these manifest distinctions, however they might relieve the mind of Moses, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them, AS THE LORD HAD SAID.

II. Let us now observe what may be ASSERTED of the miracles of Jesus Christ.

I. We may safely say, they were *real* miracles. If his turning water into wine, his walking on the sea, his feeding five thousand persons with five loaves and two small fishes, his raising up Lazarus and the widow's son from the dead, are not *real* miracles, it is not in the power of any man to say, what should be deemed miraculous.

But, as we have no knowledge of any miracle that Jesus wrought but by TESTIMONY, the question is, Are those WITNESSES whom we credit, worthy of our confidence? They
are.

are. Imagine all the reasons which may render witnesses suspected, and you will find the inspired writers unhurt by the widest stretch of your imagination.

We reject a witness if he be alone, though at the bottom, it is less the number, than the quality of the witnesses, which gives certainty to their relations. We reject those witnesses that are vicious; those which contradict themselves; those which retract what they have said; those which bear witness in their own cause; those who are interested to bear false witness; those who are credulous, and full of superstition; those who were distant in time and place; and who only report what others have affirmed; and those also, who are vain and imprudent, and who, in their actions, and discourse, betray a levity of temper and extravagance in their disposition*.

But when all these witnesses are rejected, they who have born witness to the miracles

* SAURIN.

of Jesus Christ, will not only stand their ground, but rise in the estimation of the careful observer ; because he perceives in them, not only the reverse of these infirmities, but all that is requisite to them who bear witness to matters of fact ; even to facts of the greatest importance.

To this view of those witnesses whom we credit, we may add, the following *presumptions* in favour of the miracles of Jesus Christ. First, they agree with the doctrines of grace which he came to teach. Secondly, they are connected with other facts and events, (as the dispersion of the Jews, and call of the Gentiles,) which vouch for their authenticity. Thirdly, they have not been denied, but confessed, by his greatest adversaries. For they, whether Jews or Gentiles, disputed not the existence of his miracles, but on the contrary, ascribed his miraculous operations either to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, or to the mysterious powers of magic.

Nay, we may further observe, that miracles

cles have been much more regarded in the court of the Gentiles, since the INCARNATION, than before our Lord appeared in Judea. Prior to the birth of Christ, it is said, a general prejudice in the people, and a very severe spirit in the government, prevailed amongst the Pagans against the belief of miracles*. But the fame which our Lord acquired by his mighty works, vexed the nations, and induced many individuals to make strange pretensions, in order to procure similar renown. To keep up the sinking credit of what they called *the old religion*, not only reports of miracles among themselves were multiplied, but of such as were supposed to vie with the miracles of Christ. In vain. For who now gives any credit to those ascribed to VESPASIAN, or to those which are attributed to APOLLONIUS? Their miracles, (as well as the *golden ass* of APULEIUS, written to recommend PAGAN RELIGION, as the only cure for *all vice whatsoever*,) have long since been discredited. Nor will any recent

* WHITE'S Sermons.

attempts

attempts which have been made to perform miracles, and to recommend the polytheism of the ancients, meet with better reception.

Indeed, succeeding *impostors* of the greatest note, have been afraid of running any hazard on the subject of miracles. MAHOMET, in particular, was too cunning to snatch at the seal of miraculous power to authenticate his mission. His plan was so drawn up as to avoid that danger. He contended, that the style and sublimity of the ALCORAN, was more than a miracle; or that at least, while other miracles were transient, this supernatural composition was permanent, and exceeded in dignity and excellence, other marvellous operations: and his ignorant, and interested followers, were willing to give him credit for his bold assertion.

Understrappers in hypocrisy, and babes in enthusiasm, have not been so cautious, in renouncing every seeming attempt to perform miracles: but their aukward efforts to convince us of their supernatural agency, has ended,

ended, where every man of sense and understanding foresaw they must end—in vexation to the pretended operators, and in shame to those who were so credulous as to listen to their impudent impositions.

2. The miracles of Christ were *necessary*. It was necessary that Jesus Christ should justify the divinity of his mission, and by consequence, the divinity of his doctrine, by his miracles. No other proofs would so well agree with the dignity of his person, the holiness of his ministry, with the religion which he taught, with the men who were to receive his instructions, with the full assurance of faith, by which his gospel was to be received, or with those promises and threatnings, by which the observation of our Lord's commandments are supported.

1. What other proofs would so well agree with the dignity of the person and ministry of the Son of God? Proofs drawn from reason are good between equals, as man and man; but they are not worthy the sovereign
master

master of the world, who cannot, who must not compromise his authority with his creatures, nor expose himself to human contradictions. 2. What other proofs would so well agree to that religion which emanates from God? It hath been given us as divine; it must therefore be confirmed by proofs which are divine. It is God who commands. He must, to convince us of this, act himself, and shew us, that his will is marked by the seal of his power. 3. What other proofs would so well agree with those men who are to receive the Christian religion? Though it were not unworthy of God to make use of rational proofs, they are, by no means, accommodated to the capacity of every spirit. To reason, principles must be laid down, and consequences must be drawn from them. But to judge of the certainty of principles, and of the justness of consequences, requires a certain degree of light, which the bulk of mankind have not, and an attention which they are ill able to bestow. 4. What other proofs would so well agree to the full assurance of faith with which the Christian religion should be

be received? Human reasons have only a certain degree of evidence, which cannot compel us to acquiesce in them, when they are employed on truths which are not susceptible of demonstration. Experience teaches us how often men are ingenious enough to invent difficulties, when that which is proposed for them believe, or to do, is opposite to the inclinations of their hearts. The spirit is too often the slave of the heart, or hath its residence in sensation; and, in most men, it is sentiment, or feeling, that decides. 5. What other proofs would so well agree with the promises and threatenings, by which the commandments of Christ are supported? These promises and threatnings, relate to that futurity which is beyond death, and the sepulchres of the dead; though these things appear the last and utmost bounds of all our affairs. Notwithstanding all the reasonings which philosophers have invented to prove the immortality of the soul, and, by consequence, a life to come, these verities, although demonstrated by them, are they not yet a problem to an immense number of people,

ple, who appear sufficiently free from passions? and are they not openly contradicted by some who are more rash, in proportion as they are more attached to their carnal affections? In a word, the religion of our Saviour being a divine religion, it demands proofs that are divine; AND SUCH ARE MIRACLES*.

As to the course of nature, how little do we know of it? and what is the light which philosophers afford? For even these Intimados of nature knew no more of her than what lies just before them, in common with those whom they most affect to despise: and all they know, if not A MIRACLE, is yet A MYSTERY. Let these her closet-acquaintance *steal*, as they are able, to her inmost recesses, they *can bring nothing* from thence concerning God's natural and moral government, as the Poet finely expresses it,

———BUT UNDECYPHERED CHARACTERS,

which only teach us the need we have of a

* SAURIN.

O

better

better Decypherer than that REASON, on which these men so proudly rely*.

Had we clearer and wider views of nature, we should be, perhaps, thoroughly convinced, that a miracle contains no greater exercise of divine power, than the arrangement and preservation of the settled course of things.—The shooting up of a plant in the eye of superior Beings, may not be more natural than the resurrection of the dead. But whatever we think of these things, the works of God bend not at our presence, but go forward in their own train, regardless of human praise or censure; and being the offspring of wisdom, are content to be judged by folly†.

If miracles were necessary to sanction the mission of Moses, who, in the name of God, was to bring forth the sons of Jacob from the house of bondage, both prophecies fulfilled, and miracles performed, were the proper seals of His mission, who was to take Israel out of

* Bishop WARBURTON.

† Dr. OGDEN.

Israel; the children of the promise from a carnal generation; who was also, to be a covenant to the Gentiles, and to erect a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; a kingdom which shall not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces, and consume all opposing kingdoms, and shall stand for ever.

It is no wonder therefore, that our Lord laid so much stress on the evidence which his miracles afforded to prove He was the promised Messiah. To John's disciples, he said, Go and shew to John again those things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up. To the Jews in general, this was his appeal: The works that I do in my father's name, they bear witness of me. If I do not the works of my father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.

3. The miracles of Christ were *illustrious*. For they as much agreed with the benign disposition of the New Testament, as the mira-

cles of Moses coincided with the terrors of the former dispensation. In short, the miracles ascribed to Christ and his apostles, recommend themselves to our belief on the following accounts :

They were wrought by persons who solemnly appealed to God, and who declared they would perform them. They were wrought in a public manner. Before enemies and unbelievers. In a learned age and civilized countries. Not with any air of pride, vanity, and ostentation. Not for the sake of lucre, or for worldly advantage. They were wrought in confirmation of precepts and doctrines, good and useful to mankind. At a time when men wanted neither power nor inclination to expose them if they were impostures, and were in no danger of being called atheists and heretics, and of being insulted by the populace, and persecuted by the civil magistrate, for ridiculing them. They were various and numerous. Of a permanent nature, and might be reviewed, and re-examined. Had nothing fantastical or cruel in them, but
were

were acts of kindness and beneficence. They had ceased a long time before Christ appeared, and therefore, would raise the attention of men. They converted multitudes to the faith. Were attested by proper witnesses. Foretold by the prophets, and such as the Jews expected from the Messiah*.

Though all this, and more, may be safely advanced of the miracles of Christ and his apostles, yet those performed by the latter, were done in the name of Jesus, and in no respect interfered with the seal of his peculiar mission ; but on the contrary tended to confirm it.

What shall we say then, to these things ? If after such prophecies of Christ, previous to his Incarnation, as have been stated in the first of these discourses, and such miracles as when Incarnate he unquestionably performed, we do not own Christ to be the Messiah, and put our trust in him, but

* Rev. J. JORTIN.

actually prefer to our Lord some impostor that has appeared, or some prophet yet to be expected; or if after such proofs of his mission, we prefer natural religion to the revealed, and the dictates of moral philosophers to the doctrine of the gospel, and to the life and immortality brought to light by it, are we not left without excuse? But if, on the other hand, we believe unto salvation, is not all boasting for ever excluded? Surely it is. It becomes us, therefore, to say, under all we now enjoy, and all we can expect from Christianity, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. AMEN!

SERMON

S E R M O N VIII.

ON THE PREACHING OF CHRIST.

LUKE iv. 15.

AND HE TAUGHT IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES, BEING
GLORIFIED OF ALL.

HAVING seen what Christ DID, I mean, in reference to his miraculous operations, we are now to take some notice of what he TAUGHT.

As to those places where our Lord condescended to teach, it is easy to remark, that what he said to the woman of Samaria, he himself began to fulfil. Woman, said he, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither only in this mountain, nor yet at
O 4 Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and NOW IS, when the TRUE worshippers shall worship the Father, in every place, *in spirit, and in truth*; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

It is evident, that our Lord taught his disciples on a mountain, in a ship, in common conversation by the way side, and in the houses of his friends and enemies, as well as in the temple, and in the synagogues. But wherever he taught, he was glorified of all. Not, we may be sure, of all men; but by men of all sorts; Jews and Gentiles, illiterate and learned, moral and profane.

Of those SUBJECTS on which our Lord chiefly insisted, and of the MANNER of his teaching, I purpose to give my opinion in this discourse.

I. We may observe, the SUBJECTS of our Lord's sermons were not the arts and sciences, civil law and policy, mercantile and military operations; nor were they logic, grammar,

grammar, and what is now called the *belles lettres*. On some of these things indeed, and on other matters pertaining to this life, there are incidental hints, and occasional observations in his discourses, worthy of our serious attention; and something more than this, on those duties which are inseparably connected with revealed religion.

But the stated subjects of our Lord's teaching were the purity and extent of the law, the extreme and universal depravity of human nature, the necessity of his atonement, and of regeneration to enjoy it; the spirituality of his kingdom, the nature and necessity of faith and repentance, that he was the author of both, the way, the truth, and the life; the only medium of access to the Father, and the only ground of our acceptance with him; that the weary and heavy laden were ever welcome to come to him, or believe in his name, and that those who did this, should, in no wise, be cast out: for though in this world, they might expect tribulation, yet by believing on him, they
were

were here taught to expect a peace which passeth all understanding ; a peace which should be to them, the earnest of future, and of eternal glory.

These were lessons of universal importance, and of the highest moment. Let us be thankful they are not only recorded by the Evangelists, and expounded by their best expositors, the Apostles, but that pastors and teachers, are raised up successively, to shew that what Christ taught, is for ever worthy of all acceptance.

One of these pastors and teachers has observed, that if any genuine Christian of competent understanding in his religion, should be asked, What things his master taught mankind, different from, or superior to any other teachers ? he might readily answer :—Faith in himself as a divine Saviour ; the malignant nature, and consequent danger of sin ; the certainty and promise of pardon and acceptance with God ; the doctrine of repentance and regeneration ; the love of God and our neighbour ;

neighbour; the excellency of the soul, and the wisdom and importance of its salvation; the apparent emptiness and vanity of the world, and the infinite superiority of spiritual things; the honour and pleasure of piety and goodness, of contentment with what we enjoy, of patience under what we endure, trusting God with all our hearts, mortification of sin, self-denial, forgiveness of our enemies, and injuries, and universal candour and charity. This, says Mr. Barker*, when I have added, that he preached the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, is a short sketch of those things which were inculcated by this illustrious TEACHER.

Though what has now been said of the teaching of Christ, admits of ample proof, yet some men are pleased to extol the gospels far beyond the epistles, on presumption that the Evangelists have said very little in favour of those doctrines of grace which they cannot deny, are strongly stated in the wri-

* Author of two volumes of Sermons, and of some excellent Letters to DR. DODDERIDGE.

tings of the Apostles : whereas, it would not be difficult to prove, that there is not one religious tenet unfolded in any of the inspired Epistles which is contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ, or which is not contained in the prophecies of him, and in the history of his life.

Beside, if ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, it is wrong to suppose that any part of it which properly belongs to the present œconomy of grace, is of any greater authority than another ; and it is foolish to imagine, that after the day of Pentecost, any *doctrines* should be revealed of less importance to us than what preceded that memorable effusion of the holy spirit, or which contradict the personal ministry of Jesus Christ.

II. The MANNER in which our Lord taught the way of truth, and those things which accompany salvation, is now to be regarded.

But

But who can fully comprehend, and accurately describe the manner of his teaching? For, he taught by actions as well as by words. What is most obvious in the *latter*, I will briefly mention.

1. Our Lord taught with *simplicity*.

His appearance was plain, and unadorned with the dress of any peculiar office; yet it was not rude, or of illiberal complexion. The language which he condescended to use was unrefined in its structure, inharmonious in its arrangement, and by no means the most promising to be employed in the arts of persuasion. Yet those who were sent to apprehend him, returned and said, Never man spake like this man! and all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceedeth out of his mouth.

If to us, who only *read* an abridgment of his discourses, there appears something so solemn in his devotions, so perspicuous and excellent in his instructions, so familiar, easy,
and

and elegant, in his conversations, and so pathetic in his expostulations, what must his disciples have felt when they heard him utter his mind in all these forms, and *saw*, as well as heard, that he was full of grace and truth! To whom said they, by the mouth of Peter, shall we go? Thou hast the words of ETERNAL LIFE. And when he taught daily in the temple, though the chief priests, and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, they could not, for the far greater number of the people were very attentive to hear him.

What a contrast between Christ and Aaron! The port, the dress, and the stile of that high priest, were suited to a shadowy dispensation. Whereas the words which Christ spake were spirit and life: and every thing in him, and about him, wisely accommodated to the gospel of his grace. Yet Moses with his rod, and Aaron with his bells, are by some, even to this day, more admired than that prophet who hath in all things the pre-eminence. — A vicious taste for pomp
and

and shew, in pronounciation as well as in appearance, is common, and sometimes violent; nor are those ever wanting who are disposed to indulge wandering eyes and itching ears, and who are inclined to deal more in shew than in substance, and in sound more than in sense.

2. Our Lord taught with *sincerity*.

Where this is wanting it must be imitated; for nothing can please us much, or long, on serious subjects, where sincerity is suspected. Eloquence can never supply its place. For what is eloquence, [or that at least, which is often so called,] but a persuasive turn given to the elocution to supply that inward, that conscious persuasion of the speaker, so necessary to gain a fair hearing? But the first preachers of the gospel did not need a succedaneum to that inward conscious persuasion. [Much less did Jesus Christ.] And what is the *end* of eloquence, even when it extends no further than to those more general principles, but to stifle reason, and inflame the passions?

But

But the *propagation* of Christian truths indispensably requires the aid of reason, and requires no other *human* aid. And reason can never be fairly and vigorously exerted, but in that favourable interval which precedes the appeal to the passions. These were the causes which forced the masters of eloquence to confess, that the utmost perfection of their art consists in keeping it concealed; for that the ostentation of it seemed to indicate the absence of TRUTH. Truth, (says the most candid and able of them all,) seems always to be absent when art is displayed*. Hence so many various precepts to make their most artificial periods appear artless. Now surely, that was a very suspicious instrument for heaven-directed men, which to preserve its credit, must pretend absence, and labour to keep out of sight†.

But after all, if eloquence may be consi-

* — *Ubiqunque ars ostendatur veritas abesse videatur.*

QUINT. l. ix. c. 3.

† Bishop WARBURTON.

dered as false and true, as good and bad, it will follow, that Christian eloquence cannot exist without *sincerity*; and we may safely affirm, that fundamental quality in good speech never appeared more conspicuous than in the preaching of Jesus Christ.

TRUE ELOQUENCE, said a considerable judge* of composition, I find to be none, but the serious and hearty love of truth: and that, whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others, WHEN SUCH A MAN WOULD SPEAK, his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places.

This beautiful passage I could not resist bringing forward upon the present occasion. How far it agrees with the eloquence of Jesus

* MILTON.

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Christ,

Christ, or may tend to give us just notions of Christian eloquence, you will deliberately consider.

3. Our Lord taught with *authority*.

There was something so sublime in his doctrines, prophecies, parables, sentiments, and temper ; he was so completely master of every subject on which he chose to speak ; he was so conscious in every thing he did and said of pleasing his Father, of his seeking the salvation of his people, of his being the Messiah, Mediator, and Son of God, and that his whole conduct corresponded with his mission, that it was no wonder the people who heard him were astonished, or to find it said by better judges, that he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Authority is either official, personal, or united. But it is to be lamented, that *mere* official authority should be so much admired, while personal authority is so little esteemed.

Personal

Personal authority operates by knowledge, and by love; official authority, by a power which is sometimes as remote from knowledge, as it is distant from benevolence. The force of the latter is coercion; of the former, conviction. Mere official authority only commands outward homage; but personal authority gains the heart. To *this*, all may aspire; to *that*, few can make a fair pretence. How beautiful when both are united! In Jesus Christ the union was strict and lasting; yet was he despised and rejected of men!

4. Our Lord taught with *affection*.

Had he not softened his authority by that tenderness, compassion, and good will, which were so conspicuous in his public and private ministrations, his authority must have been very forbidding, nay tremendous, to the sinful sons of men. But when they listened to his invitations, saw his joy for the conversion of the meanest mortals, his grief when the impenitent rejected his mercy with contempt; when they observed how frequently he preach-

ed to the most abandoned at the peril of his life, and considered how many miracles he wrought from the most benevolent disposition, they could not wish his authority should be diminished, or that of it there should be any end.

Authority is essential to human happiness. Where it is not, there is confusion and every evil work. Yet it cannot be supported to the content of the people, unless it is used for their real advantage. Every other scheme must fail; and the sooner it fails the better; provided that when noxious authority is suppressed, anarchy, that worst of external evils, is not suffered to succeed. But, unhappily for mankind, they who rule are not always well disposed; and they who are ruled are not always competent judges what are the proper limits of legal liberty, and when their claims for greater indulgence are lawful and expedient.

5. Our Lord taught with great *applause*.

What less could be expected from the subjects

jects which he taught, and from the manner in which they were delivered. His subjects were so salutary, his manner so gracious, his motives so pure, and the effects of his discourses so beneficial, and so different from every thing which the misinformed among the Jews, and the sophists among the Gentiles, were able to produce, that when they who heard him with serious attention, compared his teaching with the tenets propagated in the schools of HILLELL AND SHAMMAI*, or with those instructions which the STOICS or EPICUREANS spread abroad, or with the effects of each, they were convinced he was a teacher sent from God.

But our Lord was not only superior to those teachers who had made void the commandments of God by their traditions, and vexatious disputes, and to those also who never knew the way of God in truth, but to the best informed instructors in the Jewish Commonwealth.

* The heads of the two grand schools of the Jews, when Christ taught in Judea.

The excellence of that gospel which first began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto Jews and Gentiles by those that heard him, is much insisted on by the Apostle Paul. To the believing Gentiles he said, If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious. To the believing Jews he said, Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto the blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words.—But ye are come unto the mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,

covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel's.

Whence this transition? Whence this important change? By the teaching of Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; through that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation; and in which we perceive that of God, HE is made unto us who believe, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

I know not how to conclude the present discourse in a manner more suitable, or in words more solemn, than these: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Whose voice then shook the earth; but yet now hath he promised, saying, Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven: and this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are

shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. AMEN!

POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE SERMON

ON THE PREACHING OF CHRIST.

AS the word AMEN, at the close of this sermon, may strike some readers as being harsh and improper, it may perhaps be excused, if I here give a short exposition of that very serious quotation which precedes that significant term.

SEE THAT YE REFUSE NOT HIM THAT SPEAKETH : Jesus Christ, that now speaketh by his Spirit, in his Apostles. FOR IF THEY ESCAPED NOT, the Jews, WHO REFUSED HIM THAT SPAKE ON EARTH, that is, Moses ; who was only a typical Mediator, and not without sin ; MUCH MORE SHALL NOT WE ESCAPE, who profess to believe the gospel, IF WE TURN AWAY FROM HIM THAT SPEAKETH

ETH FROM HEAVEN; as the only real Mediator between God and man, and who speaks to us as Jesus Christ the righteous. WHOSE VOICE THEN SHOOK THE EARTH; when Moses spake by him, and of him; for, at the giving of the law, as it was then given, and connected with the Sinai covenant, not only Horeb trembled at his presence, but that law, with the ceremonial and judicial laws, made a wide, a lasting, and awful separation between Jews and Gentiles: BUT NOW HATH HE PROMISED, SAYING, for the benefit of mankind, of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, YET ONCE MORE, I SHAKE NOT THE EARTH ONLY, BUT ALSO HEAVEN; for his gospel was not only to be attended at first, with portentous signs from what is commonly called heaven, but was to dissolve the THEOCRATICAL state among the Jews, and to annihilate their *ecclesiastical state*; AND THIS WORD, YET ONCE MORE, SIGNIFIETH THE REMOVING OF THOSE THINGS THAT ARE SHAKEN, AS OF THINGS THAT ARE MADE; that is, of those shadows which were made to exist for an appointed season;

THAT

THAT THOSE THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN, by any art, argument, or force, MAY REMAIN. For though all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; though the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; yet the word of the Lord, that is his gospel, abideth for ever. WHEREFORE, WE RECEIVING A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED, LET US HAVE, or retain, the doctrines of GRACE, and pray for the Spirit of grace, WHEREBY WE MAY SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY, WITH REVERENCE, or with blushing, or a sense of shame for our former follies, and present infirmities; AND, at the same time, with GODLY FEAR that maketh not ashamed. FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE; not only to them who die impenitent, but to every thing in us which is absurd and foolish, or which is contrary to that grace which bringeth salvation. He that believes this, and who approves of such wisdom and goodness, may safely say, AMEN!

SERMON

S E R M O N IX.

CHRIST CALLING OTHERS TO PREACH.

MATTHEW iv. 18, 19, 20.

AND JESUS, WALKING BY THE SEA OF GALILEE, SAW TWO BRETHREN, SIMON CALLED PETER, AND ANDREW HIS BROTHER, CASTING A NET INTO THE SEA: FOR THEY WERE FISHERS. AND HE SAITH UNTO THEM, FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN. AND THEY STRAIGHT-WAY LEFT THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM.

WE have often heard those speak with propriety, and with unction, of Jesus Christ, who had very little to say on any other subject. Others we have heard preach the gospel, who gave sufficient proofs that they were possessed of talents, which would have raised them to notice in very different situations.

How

How are we to account for these things? Our reasonings are happily prevented. For, we are assured, there are a diversity of gifts by the same spirit; and that to each of the primitive ministers of the gospel, grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. These are thus enumerated in the epistle to the Ephesians. And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers. If you ask, For what end? We are told, For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. If you enquire, How long those gifts are to be subservient to these ends? the answer is, Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: and of course, to the end of the world.

But what! it may be replied, we all know that the Apostolical order was of short duration,

tion, that, strictly speaking, Prophets and Evangelists, have ceased to appear amongst us, and are we to believe they yet continue?—Yes, in their writings, and in what is written of them in the scriptures. For though dead they yet speak; and as their sound went out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world, so by the record which we have of their acts and doctrines, they continue to have a real, increasing, and beneficial interest over all inferior teachers, and will be revered in the church of Christ to the end of the world

Pastors and teachers could not be what they are, had they not the doctrines of the Apostles to consult, the words of the Prophets to inspect, and the narrative of the Evangelists to read. In a course of almost eighteen hundred years, it has been abundantly evident, that as artificial divinity has been most admired, the writings of the Apostles have been most of all neglected, and that, in those periods when barren systems were of the greatest consequence, the majesty
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of the scriptures was neither relished, nor regarded. The Reformation laid the axe to the root of that folly; but again wearied with what is truly excellent, men have relapsed into trifles, and seem more industrious to beat off a few barren leaves, than to strike at the root of those evils under which they almost love to languish.

Let us now go back to the first exertion of that divine power which our Lord manifested in calling others to preach the gospel, and continue the account, in some of the leading evidences of that fact as far as it may be convenient.

Previous to his ascension, he called twelve Apostles to preach the gospel of his kingdom, first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles; by which call he made them, as it is expressed in the text, fishers of men.

When Judas, by his horrid transgression, fell from his apostleship, and went to his own place, Matthias was chosen by lot, and numbered

bered with the eleven. How long he continued in his office, what he did and suffered, when or where he died, as this very much depends on uncertain tradition, I shall not attempt to say.

But we must not forget another Apostle, of whom, though it is said he was born out of due time, was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles : yet, in his own eyes, he was *nothing*. This was Saul of Tarsus ; afterward much better known by the name of Paul. A man of all *mere* men the best acquainted with the œconomy of our salvation ; and we may add, the most learned, laborious, holy, zealous, faithful, and humble servant of Jesus Christ, that was ever called out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Besides the twelve Apostles, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles, Christ called Seventy Disciples, and sent them two and two, before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come. These disciples had a spiritual, though it was a confined

fin'd commission; and it appears they were very successful in the discharge of their duty. For the Seventy returned again with joy, saying, LORD, even the devils are subject to us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan, as lightning, falling from heaven. He added, Behold, I give *you* power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you: notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Now, as our Lord had power while on earth to call effectually whom he would, and frequently exercised such transcendent authority, we may be confident, that by his resurrection from the dead he has not suffered the least diminution of his dominion. The plenitude of his authority after that event, is strongly marked in these words: ALL power is given to me in heaven and earth. What better proof could we have of this than the amazing commission which he immediately

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granted

granted to the adoring twelve? Go ye therefore, said he to them, TEACH all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

When the twelve disciples received this last command of their departing Lord, this extraordinary commission to the eye of human reason, might well appear the most romantic and visionary.—Every thing around them wore an appearance dangerous to their persons, and hostile to their cause. In the execution of their extensive office, they had not only to contend with the jealousy of power, and the persecution of authority; their progress was impeded by foes still more formidable; by the deep-rooted prejudices, the favorite superstitions, and the darling vices of a corrupted world. From their countrymen in particular, as they had nothing to hope, they had every thing to fear. They
had

had to oppose the inveteracy of custom; and what was more formidable, the prejudices which arose from that distinction which the Jews had long enjoyed as the favoured people of the most high God; a distinction which had been supported by a train of events equally gracious and wonderful; and in some particular instances, confirmed by miracles, that carried with them the very stamp and seal of omnipotence*.

Such were their difficulties. How then was this extraordinary commission fulfilled? By virtue of this promise, Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. With authority to teach, he gave them ability to execute their commission with wonderful, and with lasting success. Thanks be unto God, said Paul, (speaking of himself and other Apostles) who always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. This triumph was not confined to their personal mi-

* WHITE'S SERMONS.

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* WHITE'S SERMONS.

nistry. The Apostles are still triumphant in the doctrine of the Cross, and will be *always*, even to the end of the world : so that it fully appears, that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.

As it is evident that the Apostles and Evangelists were called to their respective duties by Jesus Christ, and qualified to fulfil them by the operations of his Spirit, we cannot conceive that they will meet with his approbation, who are not qualified for the work of the ministry, and called by them that believe in his name to preach the gospel of his grace.

We are told, as certain prophets and teachers, ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto *I* have called them ; and when *they* had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. Now, we have no reason to suppose,
that

that such men entered on any *particular* service on any inferior call ; or that, in any instance, they fulfilled their Christian ministry without the energy of the holy Spirit. The ablest minister of the New Testament, speaking of himself, and of his Fellow-Apostles, said, Our sufficiency is of God.

It is granted, that common pastors and teachers, cannot pretend to the same extraordinary call and assistance with the Apostles of Christ. This would be absurd. For this would be to suppose, that they had the same duties to discharge, the same temptations to resist, and the same oppositions to surmount, as those Ambassadors of Christ ; which is evidently untrue. Nay, this would be to suppose, that the labours and writings of the Apostles were, in a great measure, useless to mankind. Yet what should we be, if they had not gone before us ; since the wall of the city of God hath twelve *foundations*, and in *them*, the names of the twelve APOSTLES of the Lamb ?

But as *our* qualifications for the ministry are dispensed in different degrees, and as there are a diversity of gifts by the same spirit, it becomes us to be very cautious lest *we* infringe on the liberty of prophecy. Since all of us confess, we know but in part, and prophecy but in part, and that we now see through a glass darkly, why should we indulge airs that are utterly inconsistent with such a becoming confession?

It were well, says Bishop Taylor, if men would as much consider themselves as the doctrines which they teach, and think that they may as well be deceived by their *own* weakness, as persuaded by the arguments of a doctrine which *other* men, as wise as themselves, call inevident. For it is a hard case, that we shall think ALL Papists and Anabaptists and Sacramentarians to be fools and wicked persons; certainly, among all these sects, there are very many wise men and good men, as well as erring; and although some zeals are so hot, and their eyes so inflamed with their ardors, that they do not think their adversaries look like other men, yet certainly

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we find, by the results of their discourses, and the transactions of their affairs of civil society, that they are men that speak and make syllogisms, and use reason, and read scripture ; and although they do no more understand ALL of it than we do, yet they endeavour to understand as much as concerns them, even all they can ; even all that concerns repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ : and therefore, methinks this also should be another consideration, distinguishing the persons ; for if the persons be Christians in their lives, and Christians in their profession ; if they acknowledge the eternal Son of God for their master and their Lord, and live in all relations as becomes persons making such professions ; why then should I hate such persons whom God loves, and who love God, who are partakers of Christ, and Christ hath a title to them, who dwell in Christ, and Christ in them ; why should I hate them, because their understandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the same masters, they have not met with the same books, nor

the same company, or have not the same interest, or are not so wise, or else are wiser, (that is, for some reason or other, which I neither do understand, nor ought to blame,) have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their *school questions*, to the sense of MY *sect* or *interest* ?

These are admirable remarks ; but when were they written ? Alas ! when the Established Church was under oppression and persecution. But to the honour of Bishop Stillingfleet, he wrote his *Irenicum*, when the Church of England was in a more settled situation ; and, it is owned without regret, that some of her ablest ministers, since the days of Stillingfleet, have pleaded for reasonable liberty in a manner that secures the credit of their intellectual and moral attainments.

Of necessary qualifications for the ministry of the gospel, it is in vain to consult the jarring-jumble of human opinions : interested tutors, parental ambition, and the vain desires
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of pupils, have long since concurred to make that necessary which seldom is of any use; and that reputable, which, in common, is something worse than a mere waste of time. But the opposite extreme is equally to be deplored. For who can say, whether that science, which is falsely so called, or that ignorance, which is the unavoidable shame of so many preachers, is most hurtful to a man who would pass for an acceptable minister of Jesus Christ?

Of the *final* end of the ministry we can better judge, since this is the Christian edification of those that sit under it, terminating in the glory of God. Yet even of this, to form a just judgment, is by no means so common as might be expected. Dissenters claim the right of choosing their own ministers, and it would certainly be not right to deprive us of that practice. Yet, *we* must confess, that the exercise of this right is often abused. Perhaps when a minister is wanting, the best way of being supplied is to engage with none who is not well recommended; and then, on trial,
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for the Church that wants him to judge whether he is or is not suitable for *them*.

From these difficulties, which cannot be concealed, I think we should always distinguish between a man's being called to the ministry at *large*, and his being chosen as a *stated* preacher. In the latter case, you have had my opinion; which, after my decease, I wish you to regard. In the former, I apprehend, whoever holds the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and is disposed to state and defend them to his fellow men, if he meets with any believers who are willing to hear him, and who soberly affirm, that his labours are to their edification, no man may forbid him.

It is of great moment to be fully satisfied Christ is the HEAD of his own Church; that, to this end, he hath assumed our nature, and makes believers in him partakers (in a sound sense of the term) of the divine nature; and that he is the life, light, and glory of his own people. Such views of our Redeemer
most

most deeply convince us, of his right to rule over us, and of its being our duty to endeavour in all things to be subject unto him. Such views most deeply convince us of his care and compassion to the members of his mystical body, and that he is as willing, as he is able, to save them evermore. Such views most deeply convince us, that his ministers, in every age, are raised up by his power, qualified by his grace, and called by his Spirit to labour in word and doctrine. This hath an effect which is doubly pleasing. For, it makes the ministers of Christ humble under their greatest attainments, and their hearers thankful for those gifts and graces which he has bestowed on men for their advantage.

A standing ministry in the Church of Christ, though inferior to those ambassadors unto whom was first committed the word of reconciliation, is a great blessing to mankind. The shafts of ridicule, whether levelled by lords, or wits, against this sacred institution, would fall back from whence they rose without

out alarm, if every minister was conscientious in his calling, sound in his judgment, and diligent in his profession. In every considerable occupation, but that of a religious complexion, a succession of settled and appointed professors, are thought to be expedient. Who imagines the statesman has less of professional knowledge, because he is a statesman? Or the lawyer, because he is a lawyer? or the physician, because he is a physician? or the merchant, because he is a merchant? or even the tradesman, because he is a tradesman? Must then, a preacher know the less of theology because he is a preacher? All professional men are liable to err; but that they should know less of their profession, than those who are of another, or than those who are of none, is one of those paradoxes at which wisdom revolts.

Not only a stated ministry, but a stated minister in one place, if he be competent to the discharge of his duty, is of great service. He knows more of his hearers; his hearers know more of him, than any occasional ministers

ministers and hearers know of each other. A hint in one discourse, awakes, or produces, an association of ideas, in reference to others on the same subject, or bordering upon it, that cannot be expected from a stranger. It has given me pleasure to observe, that very few attempts to introduce promiscuous preaching among *dissenters*, have succeeded ; while, at the same time, I have observed, that the cause which some people have warmly espoused, cannot be carried on without it. What disgrace would a man of upright intentions, of tolerable parts, and of good understanding, think it, if, with all this, before three months elapsed, he *must* give way to another, and he, in his turn, to another ; so that the quarters, if not the months in the year, might be numbered by the different ministers who preached to the same people ! Pious men may have some plea to gratify this fickle temper, therefore the severity of censure might be unjust ; but I own, I should think myself dishonoured by indulging it. If indeed, a man has a stated service, to preach occasionally to others, or to invite others to
preach

preach for him, may, with prudence, be commendable : but how different this is from that unsettled procedure that some are industrious to support, I need not specify. Only let me add, they who are so fond of changes have no countenance from the conduct, or spirit of the Apostles. For, first, their commission was peculiar to their office ; which office does not now exist ; and, secondly, it is well known, that where the Apostles were successful, churches were settled, and pastors and deacons provided. They set in order the things that were *wanting*, and ordained elders in every city.

But, whatever may be my sentiments on this subject, they who in these things act amiss, would do still worse to go out of their own way, unless they themselves were convinced they had acted improperly. Let every man be fully persuaded in his *own* mind, in reference to his *own* actions. But, there let him stop ; and not imagine his neighbour is bound to approve, much less to applaud, his favorite decisions.

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To conclude . It is Christ who maketh fishers of men ; and, without his Spirit, no man ever was, is, or will be, an able minister of the New Testament. It is he also, that preserves those who are caught. They are taken to be improved, not to be injured : taken for their master's use, not to be the prey of artful men. Let us pray therefore, that the Lord of the harvest, would send forth labourers into his harvest, that vacant congregations may be well supplied, and that those who have not yet heard of that Lord, may hear the voice of the Son of God, and live ! AMEN !

SERMON

S E R M O N X.

ON THE SENTENTIOUS SAYINGS OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW vii. 24.

THEREFORE, WHOSOEVER HEARETH THESE SAYINGS
OF MINE, AND DOTHT THEM, I WILL LIKEN HIM
UNTO A WISE MAN, WHICH BUILT HIS HOUSE UPON
A ROCK; AND THE RAIN DESCENDED, AND THE
FLOODS CAME, AND THE WINDS BLEW, AND BEAT
UPON THAT HOUSE; AND IT FELL NOT: FOR IT
WAS FOUNDED UPON A ROCK.

SHORT isolated sentences, we are told,
was the mode in which antient wisdom de-
lighted to convey its precepts, for the regu-
lation of life and manners. Not that we are
to imagine, this was the only mode in which
antient wisdom was pleased to convey instruc-
tion. Far from it. But, while this method
was in fashion, Solomon excelled all men in
proverbial

proverbial speeches; and, before it was out of fashion, the sententious sayings of Jesus Christ, were sufficient to convince the intelligent how far such a method of teaching might be improved.

THEN such teaching had much to recommend it. For, it was of great antiquity; had acquired considerable reputation, both in the church and world; since what was thus taught, was generally acute, easy to be retained, and pleasing to the hearer. In short, it was so acceptable, that all nations have had their peculiar proverbs; and, I believe, that most individuals have been more influenced by short pithy sayings, which they approved, than by laboured systems, profound treatises, or long and tedious disputations.

It is true, the abuse of this mode of instruction, on the one hand, and the dread of undistinguishing censure on the other, have made many averse to glean up the principles of wisdom from such mutilated forms of speech. These censures have produced dis-

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gust,

gust, where nothing more than caution was wanting. They have done what is worse; for they have opened a wide door to loads of sentimental trash, which has been raked up, and brought to market, in confidence of a rapid sale. But, however the vicious may applaud those dashed-off discourses, heavy-laden with idle digressions, speckled with marks of admiration, and abounding with double-meanings, they who are possessed with a tolerable degree of judgment and taste, nauseate such flippant and ensnaring productions.

To such, the sententious sayings of our Lord will prove a treat. But, as I am allowed, in this situation, to suppose, that some may be present not so well acquainted with his sayings as others; to them, I would observe, that the most simple method of gaining instruction from the maxims of Jesus Christ, is, perhaps, the best: which, as I take it, is to read the New Testament carefully, and, as any sententious saying occurs, to mark it
with

with a pen, or pencil, that it may, with ease, be re-consulted upon any future occasion.

Further ; as any of us have capacity and leisure, it would increase the probability of our gaining advantage by the aphorisms of Christ, if we observe how they were introduced, and when ; the subject with which they are connected, the end they are designed to answer, and the agreement between them and those doctrines which are sometimes more fully explained in the New Testament.

Permit me now to lessen your labour, by laying before you a specimen of the sententious sayings of our Lord, selected from what is commonly called his sermon on the mount ; from which, the words of my text are taken.

But previous to this, it may be proper to remark, that I shall not take any notice of the BEATITUDES in the beginning of his excellent discourse ; not because they are not, every one of them, deserving our attention, but because they are more in number than

could now be introduced, unless we were to confine ourselves to them alone.—I have only to add, that to every saying of our Lord which may here be brought forward, a short comment will be subjoined.

I. YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Matth. v. 14.

CHRIST is most eminently the light of the world. Next to him, and by him, his *Apostles* were the light of mankind; and all his genuine *Disciples*, in every age, are children of light.—The words of the text chiefly refers to that doctrine which the Apostles received and taught, and which they were to propagate in every nation.—Without the doctrine of life and immortality, the conduct of the Apostles appears to be unaccountable. With it, their behaviour was consistent, and illustrious. *Their* light was not only distinguished from the light of *others*, but from their *own* good works: and, as their good works were done in the light, and distinguished by it, so it is equally evident, they
were

were performed in the spirit of adoption ; for they were such as would glorify their FATHER who is in heaven.

II. THINK NOT THAT I AM COME TO DESTROY THE LAW, OR THE PROPHETS : I AM NOT COME TO DESTROY, BUT TO FULFIL. Matth. v. 17.

Fear and hope commonly produce a crowd of thoughts on the same subject, but with different sensations. They who feared Christ would destroy the law, or the prophets, would naturally think of such ruin. They who hoped for such destruction, would likewise indulge many thoughts on its supposed approach. But the first would think and tremble ; the second, would muse on the same subject and rejoice. Christ assured them, for such thoughts, on any principle, there was not the least foundation. I am not come, said he, to destroy, but to fulfil. Not to fill-up ; but to fulfil. Not only to fulfil the law, by his obedience and oblation, but also the prophets, by accomplishing their predictions of

his person and grace. Yet he who came to fulfil both the law and the prophets, did not come to *confound* them, or to give any sanction to that abuse. The excellence of the law is not undervalued by strongly asserting the pre-eminence of the gospel. We might as well assert that we despise the moon, unless we admit that she is, or that she contains the sun.

III. SWEAR NOT AT ALL. Matth. v. 34.

When we consider that the law required that they who were under it, should fear the Lord their God, and serve him, and *swear* by his name; that Abraham made his servant swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, and that an oath is still required as a useful mean to put an end to all strife, it is not credible that an oath is absolutely forbidden in the prohibition which is now before us. Probably, the injunction refers to those tricks which the Pharisees invented, and which their followers admired. It is said they taught the people, that if they
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omitted the name of God in their oaths, they were not binding, and other dangerous maxims, which our Lord completely refuted. It is yet more evident, that he forbade the use of oaths in common conversation: and, from the context, it appears, they were taught by him to distinguish between those oaths in which they swore to *perform* what they might not be able to effect, and those in which they only attested, in the most solemn manner, what they knew to be truth.

IV. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES. Matt. v. 44.

This is not a mere matter of counsel, but a command. Nor was it unknown, however it might be disregarded, under the Old Testament*. Every body is able to perceive some difference between that charity which suffereth long, and is kind, and that complacency which cannot exist without some delight in the object esteemed. The former is here commanded, not the latter; and this

* Prov. xxv. 21.

command supposes, that the inheritance and hope of believers, are out of the reach of their enemies ; that no man is beneath their love ; that their motives to exercise benevolence are strong and lasting ; that the most fervent charity is consistent with Christianity ; that persecution is not ; and that they who properly regard this injunction, are taught of God.

V. WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO. Matt. vi. 21.

All men are so dissatisfied with the past, and so straitened with what is barely present, that if they had no happiness in reversion, they would be miserable beings. This prompts them to lay up treasure for the future. Where that is, whether on earth, or in heaven, thither their hearts ascend, or settle. If this be true, it is a truth which gives a mortal blow to *disinterested love*. For we cannot love, with delight, what we do not prefer, nor can we prefer one treasure to another, without a real, or imaginary ground
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of preference. When, therefore, we suppose that any pursuit of our's is no way connected either with earthly, or heavenly advantage, in it we have no rational satisfaction. What, then, is our *chief* treasure? Is it substantial, safe, everlasting, and worthy of our supreme delight? A serious question, truly. For love divorced from judgment, or destitute of understanding, is that perversion of order which none of us are able to defend, or have power always to enjoy.

VI. NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS.
Matth. vi. 24.

What is elliptical in these words, may, perhaps, be thus supplied. No man at the same time, or with equal alacrity, can serve two masters of opposite interests, and of adverse dispositions. One of the two must be renounced and despised.—Our Lord adds, Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. If ever there was an idol called Mammon, we might infer, as they could not serve God and Bacchus, nor serve God and Venus, neither
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could they serve God and Mammon : which, in plainer speech, is to say, that none can be a drunkard, an unclean person, or covetous, and a true servant of the living God.—When the mammon, or riches of this world, is obtained by fraud, secured by injustice, or consumed on our lusts, they who act in this manner are not religious. Yet how many have not only argued for the coalition which is here condemned, but have thought themselves sagacious in defending their extravagant folly ! But hitherto, every effort to discredit this maxim hath failed ; and, we may be confident, that every future attempt will be in vain. Artful and unprincipled men may be wise in their own conceit, may be applauded by a corrupt posterity, and prosper in the world ; but they must eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

VII. SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF
GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Matth.
vi. 33.

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He who has no capital pursuit in view, is unstable as water; and such men, like Reuben, cannot excel. But when the *chief* pursuit of any man is some favourite portion of earthly felicity, his life becomes vicious, and his crimes inevitably produce vexation. These evils we shall avoid, in proportion as we esteem the wholesome advice which these words exhibit. This is not all; for as this advice is regarded, we shall engage in the noblest chase, in a manner that secures success. By this advice, we are encouraged, before all things, to seek the kingdom of God; not by the merit of *our* righteousness, but by the acceptance of *HIS*; not that we may walk according to the will of the flesh, but in the spirit of adoption. — This counsel, though admirably suited to the primitive Christians, and greatly revered by them, was not intended to be confined to the Apostolic age. — Without a warrant, it would be presumptuous in us to aspire to the kingdom of heaven; yet unless we seek it, as here directed, we practically renounce revealed religion in this world, and are left without
one

one ray of rational hope that when we leave it, we shall enjoy a better. On the other hand; if this kingdom, and this righteousness, are our *predominant* concern, such an addition of other things may be expected, as he who grants to us the kingdom thinks proper to bestow. As this is believed, we shall know how to abound, and how to suffer need; and shall certainly find, that godliness with contentment is great gain.

VIII. TAKE THEREFORE, NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW. Matth. vi. 34,

Without the word *therefore*, this text is liable to be perverted; and with it, unless we are careful, we may mistake our Lord's intention. Such thoughts for the morrow only are forbidden, as he had previously condemned; which, from the context, appear to be those which argue distrust in God, perplexity of mind, or something inconsistent with our duty, and the setting our affections on things above. *Difficult* as it may be to comply with this precept, yet, if we seek first the

the kingdom of heaven, if we believe that God is our father, that what is necessary for us will not be withheld, and that sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, we shall find it is not *impracticable*.—That unbelievers should be anxious for earthly things, is the common consequence of infidelity; but that Christians should applaud such conduct, or envy such a situation, is a species of folly that must be ever offensive to God, and always injurious to them who are addicted to unbelief.

IX. JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED. Matth. vii. 1.

This rule was given to individuals in their private capacity, and refers to those rash judgments which they are apt to pass, and sometimes willing to execute, on other people.—God is the Judge of all. Public persons have authority to judge of those cases which are properly brought before them. Every man has a right to judge for *himself*, in matters that affect his own conscience, and so far of the opinions of *others*, as may guide him

him into the path of duty ; but no man has a right to judge of the final state of his neighbour, or to compel him to think, or to worship, as he may please to direct : nor has A, if he loudly complains of B, any right to be a judge in his own cause. Let us, therefore, not attempt to confound the established order of things ; lest with what judgment we judge, we should be judged ; and with what measure we mete, it should be measured to us again.— This is a mortifying caution ; for, it supposes, nothing would be more unwelcome to us, on certain occasions, than to fall under the law of retaliation, or to meet with the counterpart of our own misconduct.

X. GIVE NOT THAT WHICH IS HOLY
UNTO THE DOGS, NEITHER CAST YE YOUR
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE. Matth. vii. 6.

It is ungenerous to reproach by opprobrious names, those who are not exactly of our sentiments, and who approve not of our modes of worship. But it is a silly thing to suppose, that all men are virtuous, or that some are
not

not so wicked, as to be out of the reach of moral reformation.—All excellence is relative; and that which cannot be relished, should not be obtruded. The turbulent and the stupid, will snarl and stare at the best advice. They will neither renounce their nature, nor abandon their habits, for any thing we can give them, or cast before them.—In public assemblies, all are welcome to attend; but in private addresses to individuals, the wisdom of the serpent is as needful as the simplicity of the dove. Thus circumstanced, to beware of men, is our duty: but to be indiscreet, is not only to expose ourselves to intemperate resentment, but to draw down on our best sentiments, misconstruction, and illiberal abuse.

XI. WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YOU EVEN SO TO THEM: FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. *Matth. vii. 12.*

If this is what the law teaches, as one branch of our mutual duty, and if this is
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what the prophets have confirmed, we may infer, that even this *one* branch of our duty will not be properly regarded, where the law is not revered, and the prophets are not believed.—Ignorance is neither the mother of devotion, of doctrine, or duty ; nor, indeed, is unbelief.—Let us then be attentive both to the law and the prophets ; and, as our knowledge of each abounds, we shall be convinced that between saying, *This is the law and the prophets*, and saying, *This is ALL that is contained in the law and the prophets*, there is an obvious difference, and the distinction is of importance. As our knowledge is augmented, we shall perceive, that the law, considered strictly as law, knows nothing of remission ; but of this, the prophets have much to say. Now, we would, not only that men should treat us justly, but kindly ; and among other instances of their compassion, that they should readily remit our daily offences. Will it not therefore follow, that without the doctrine of grace, we shall neither do all that to others which they wish, nor they all that to us, which we desire ; and that neither
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they nor we shall do what the Lord hath commanded to his disciples ?

XII. BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHICH COME TO YOU IN SHEEP'S CLOATHING, BUT INWARDLY, THEY ARE RAVENING WOLVES. Matth. vii. 15.

This caution is of great moment. Seldom, however, is it well understood ; very seldom is it properly regarded.—False prophets are false teachers ; and, like *Bar-jesus*, they withstand the truth, and seek to turn their hearers from the faith. Yet, while thus employed, false prophets would, in general, be thought to teach *purser* notions than the ministers of Christ. *Externally* they come to you, and to others, (for they are yet on their rambling tour,) uncalled ; and they choose to do this in sheep's cloathing ; because to the innocence of that harmless animal, they make the boldest pretences. But *inwardly*, they are ravening wolves ; the very reverse of what they seem ; voracious and highly injurious.—Our Lord was pleased to add, Ye shall know
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them by their fruits. An addition which, through the inadvertence of some, and the prejudices of others, has occasioned two mistakes. First, some have thought these false prophets are *easy* to be detected; whereas, when our Lord says, *Ye* shall know them, he speaks of the well-instructed, and of the well-inclined; and not of the ignorant, and unbelieving. Secondly, others imagine, that as these false prophets are to be known by their *fruits*, they are only to be judged of by their immoral behaviour; but he who is unable to perceive any thing unsound in their doctrine, will find himself a little too late convinced, if he only judges of them by their iniquitous actions.

XIII. A GOOD TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH EVIL FRUIT; NEITHER CAN A CORRUPT TREE BRING FORTH GOOD FRUIT. Matth. vii. 18.

The good tree, and corrupt tree, in this text, are not put for good, and corrupt men; but for ministers whose doctrines are whole-
some

some and noxious. A good minister will not intentionally, however he may be tempted, bring forth evil doctrine. But a bad minister, whatever pretences he may make of being almost, or altogether perfect, will seldom propagate sound doctrine: never, in its proper connection, and in an evangelical temper.—It is not their mission, whether internal or external, by which our Lord requires you to judge of ministers; but by truth and holiness; thus their errors and iniquities are to be detected. Only observe, that truth or error take the *lead*: and if, by the scriptures, you cannot, on religious subjects, distinguish the one from the other, you will find that, judging only by the holiness and iniquity of their conversation, you are liable to be repeatedly deceived.

I have now given as large a *specimen* of the sententious sayings of Jesus Christ, as the limits of this discourse will allow. In conclusion, I shall only observe, that whether they are regarded, or treated with contempt; whether we build, with the wise, our house upon

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a rock,

a rock, or, with the foolish, upon the sand, the rain will descend, the floods will come, and the winds will blow and beat upon the structure which we erect. In short, from above, beneath, and on every side, we must expect to be tried and assaulted. God grant, that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may, in every trial, be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ! AMEN!

SERMON

S E R M O N X I.

PROPHETIC DECLARATIONS OF JESUS
CHRIST.

JOHN xiii. 19.

NOW I TELL YOU BEFORE IT COME, THAT, WHEN IT
IS COME TO PASS, YE MAY BELIEVE THAT I AM HE.

THE object which our Lord had in view, in pronouncing these words, was to confirm the faith of all his Apostles, excepting Judas. His apostacy is here predicted ; and in terms plain enough to make it evident, that the treason of this apostate was unconcealed. I speak, said our Lord, not of you all : I know whom I have chosen : but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me. Our Redeemer was pleased to add, Now I tell

you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may BELIEVE that I am *he*.

Faith in Christ, as the Son of God, and the only Saviour of sinful men, may be considered as a *positive* institution. For it is not a duty which can be discovered by the light of nature, or that can be learned from the moral law.

We are expressly told, the just shall live by faith; and, as plainly informed, that the law is not of faith, but the man that doth them, shall live in them.—The precepts of the law require *obedience*; and, if violated, the penal sanction of the law, demands the death of the transgressor. But, the promise of eternal life, supposes redemption by Jesus Christ, and cannot be enjoyed without *faith* in Him. The promised inheritance is of faith, that it might be by grace; and, that the promise of IT, might be sure to all the seed. To *believe*, therefore, that Christ is what he is, and to confide in him, as he is exhibited

exhibited in the scripture, is a matter of the most serious importance.

If we cordially believe the gospel, we shall endeavour to obey it; and if our faith be unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, it will be that of which we need not be ashamed; it will be that which argues newness of life; that which makes it manifest we serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

To produce proper confidence in himself as the Messiah, our Lord shewed his disciples why they should believe in him. He repeatedly urged the *miracles* which he had performed: and here he argues from that spirit of *prophecy* with which he was so eminently endowed.

The prophecies of, or concerning Christ, have been already regarded; now, his own prophetic declarations, some of them at least, are to be inspected. For in this, as well as in the preceding sermons, it is the subject,

more than a mere exposition of the text, which I request you to keep in view.

Let us then, in the first place, take some notice of the prophetic declarations of Jesus Christ; and, in the next, answer some of those objections which are thrown in our way; and then conclude this discourse by deducing such inferences as the subject seems to admit.

I. The prophetic declarations of Jesus Christ are numerous, and of great consequence. They may be divided into two classes: those which concerned himself, and those which concern the Christian church.

Of those which concerned himself, it is certain, that he foretold his own sufferings; both from the Jews and Gentiles, with many affecting, and almost incredible circumstances attending them; that his sufferings would be unto death, the death of the cross, at Jerusalem, by the treachery of Judas, and connected with the transient desertion of his Apostles, and with the temporary triumph of his enemies;

enemies ; that, in defiance of all their rage, and cunning, he would arise from the dead ; that it should be on the third day after his decease ; that the truth of his resurrection, however it might be opposed, would be invincible, and that, as it prevailed, he would be declared to be the Son of God with power.

The substance of these predictions you will not dispute ; and, that they have been accomplished you have no doubt. I proceed, therefore, to the second class, on which it may be proper to be a little more explicit.

II. Those predictions of our Lord, which concern the Christian church, relate chiefly to his Apostles, to the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles.

I. Of his *Apostles*, our Lord foretold, that *one* of them would be ruined by his own transgression ; that the *eleven*, though alarmed and dispersed at his crucifixion, should, soon afterwards

terwards he endued with power from on high, and become as bold as they had been timid, and as much addicted to an heavenly interest, as before the day of Pentecost they had been fond of an earthly establishment.—The fall of Satan, and the manner of his defeat, by the ministry of the word, and the wide diffusion of truth in the Apostolic age, he likewise predicted, with some circumstances attending the widest spread of the gospel which would have been omitted, had not our Lord been confident of their fulfilment. Luke x. 18, 19. Matth. xxvi. 13.

2. Of the destruction of *Jerusalem* he foretold, that it would fall by the hands of the Romans, though Judea was then a Roman province; that it would be utterly destroyed, so that one stone should not be left upon another; that this inevitable destruction should be designed and effected, before the then subsisting generation passed away; that when those Christians who lived to see the abandoned city compassed with armies, they might know its desolation was nigh, (though that
city

city had often been protected from similar invasions;) and that their safety was connected with their flight; that not a hair of their head should perish, and that whosoever should call on his name, in that calamity, should be saved*.

3. Of the dispersion of the *Jews*, Moses himself had predicted this circumstance of their fortune, in terms of the greatest energy. He had told them—that they should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, and that they should be scattered among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other—that, among the nations, into which they should be driven, they should find no ease, nor rest, and that they should be only oppressed and crushed alway—that they should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations—and that their plagues should be wonderful, and of long continuance†.

* Matt. xxiv. 2, 16, 28, 34. Luke xxi. 20, 21. xxii. 18. Acts ii. 21.

† Deut. xxviii.

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These prophecies had been, to a certain degree, fulfilled in other parts of their history: but there was to be a time, when the wrath of God should come upon them to the uttermost*. This time was now come, when their city was destroyed, and their land desolated, by the arms of Titus. Then, as Jesus prophesied of them, were the days of vengeance, that all things, which were written, should be fulfilled: then, were they to be led away captive into all nations: and thenceforth, was Jerusalem to be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the TIMES of the Gentiles should be fulfilled†.

4. Of the conversion of the *Gentiles*, our Lord, though a Jew, and considered as a man only, in the lowest class of the Jews, that is, of the most confined and bigoted education, was not restrained from giving that sublime command to his followers.—GO AND TEACH ALL NATIONS. He quoted a prophecy from

* 1 Thess. ii. 16. † Luke xxi. 22, 24. See Bishop Hurd on Prophecy; Vol. I. Sermon VI.

Isaiah,

Isaiah, in the following words—Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment, i. e. DECLARE A NEW LAW, to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench; i. e. (as all interpreters explain these proverbial expressions) he shall not employ the least degree of force or violence in the propagation of this law, till he send forth judgment unto victory; till it finally prevail against all opposition; and in his name shall the Gentiles trust*.

How far these prophecies have been fulfilled, though they once seemed as incredible as any prophecy yet unaccomplished, merits your serious consideration. Indulge it, by comparing what is *now* history with these remarkable predictions. Thus, what is fulfilled

* Matt. xii. 18, 21, as expounded by BISHOP HURD.

already,

already, will lead you to expect the accomplishment of other events in their appointed seasons. But, I hope, you will always be upon your guard, lest you should pretend to open what is yet concealed, or assume the gift of prophecy to yourselves, or listen to the spurious prophecies of illiterate and conceited people.

II. The objections which are thrown in our way, to make us inattentive to the prophetic declarations of Jesus Christ, are trifling; at least such as I have met with are no better; and, therefore, they may soon be dismissed.

I. It is said, the prophetic declarations of Jesus Christ cannot prove him to be the Messiah, because Moses, and other prophets, have prophesied of the *same* things.

We answer, if there was not a single prophecy peculiar to Christ, (which is far from being the fact,) it is plain, that two prophets might prophecy of the same events, by the
same

same spirit, without the second, in any respect, being indebted to the first : and their agreement, though it indicates equal inspiration, does not allow us to suppose, they were, in every view, of the same character.—Moses and Balaam prophesied of the same events : yet Balaam was not the servant of God ; nor was he king in Jeshurun.

Besides ; the prophets who were *before* Christ, spake of him as the promised Messiah. To him, as hath been noticed*, give *all* the prophets witness ; and, of those who came *after* him, they not only confirm what their predecessors had said of our Lord, but the *last* of them affirms, that the *spirit* of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

Further ; we may observe, that Christ prophesied of himself as the HEAD of his church, and that, as such, he was to be revered to the end of the world : a thing unattempted either by any prophet in the former

* See SERMON I.

dispensation,

dispensation, or under the present state of divine favour. Yet he who prophesied thus of his peculiar dignity said, Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart. How to account for this, without distinguishing between the nature which he took upon him, and that, which may, with emphasis, be called his own, I cannot conceive.

In short, only of Jesus can it be said, that he hath prevailed to open the book of future events, and to loose the seven seals thereof. All, therefore, that John saw was by his favour. Of this we are informed in the *beginning* of the Revelations, and we are again reminded of the same fact at the *close* of that mysterious book. The first words of the Apocalypse are these: The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must, some of them, shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel, unto his servant John: and near the close of these revelations we read, I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto *you* these things in the churches:

I am

I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

2. Some have objected, that if from the *miracles* and *prophecies* of Christ, it appears he was the promised MESSIAH, and that we are not to look for another, it does not follow, that his Person is truly divine, or that he made a real atonement for sin by his death on the cross.

We ask then, *who* is he that we might believe in him? and *what* hath he done, that may sufficiently induce us to confide in his mediation? To these questions, they who thus object, reply so loosely, and in a manner so inconsistent with what is written of him in the sacred scriptures, that, for my own part, while those writings are properly revered, I have no notion that any person who fears God, will be much hurt by their chicane: what injury they may do to them who choose to live by sight, and not by faith, and who are fonder of ancient or modern philosophy, than of the doctrines of inspiration, I pretend not to determine.

termine. How far the words of Jeremiah are applicable to such people, they would do well to consider. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed, and taken : lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord ; and what wisdom is in them ?

I shall now conclude this discourse by deducing some of those inferences which the subject of it thus proposed and pursued, seems to excite.

From the prophetic powers of Jesus Christ, we may infer, that those things he has not foretold, as well, and as much, as those things which he hath thought proper to predict, are open and manifest in his sight. Peter said nothing more than the bare truth, when he said, Lord, thou knowest all things. To entertain, therefore, the strongest views of the omniscieny of Christ, is to indulge a temper which cannot be criminal, but which may be improved by us to our daily advantage.

If

If we unite the combined powers of prophecy and miracles that meet in him who is the Son of God, we must believe that he is able to subdue even all things to himself; and that, if his kingdom does not approach so rapidly, or increase to that extent, as some have expected, other reasons than want of power must be assigned for its present contracted state.—Till the Apostles were endued with power from on high, of his kingdom they had the grossest apprehensions; and we have facts in plenty to convince us, that without the continued operations of divine power, the kingdom of our Lord is never augmented in the minds, or hearts, of men. But we are sure, that divine power cannot languish; and we have reason to believe, that infinite understanding is unsearchable. Why, therefore, should we censure what we cannot comprehend, or despair of the final accomplishment of that which Christ hath purposed to fulfil? I must again repeat it, that what hath come to pass, warrants our firm belief in what is

yet to be fulfilled ; and authorises us to say of
Jesus Christ, Blessed are all they who put
their trust in him ! AMEN.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ON THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST:

LUKE XXIV. 26.

SHOULD NOT CHRIST TO HAVE SUFFERED THESE
THINGS?

MEN in all ages have believed, that there is a close connection between suffering and salvation. The great question on which they have been so much divided, is not, whether sinners can be saved without stripes, but by *whose* stripes they are healed.

Of being saved by the sorrows of a substitute, we have no notion from the mere light of nature, nor any instruction from the moral law of God : but by the scriptures we are taught expressly, that Christ died for the

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unjust ;

unjust; and that, there is none other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.

A fact of this importance could not be withheld from the church of God in the earliest period of its existence: and from Paul's defence of himself before king Agrippa, it appears, that what this Apostle taught of redemption by Jesus Christ, was nothing *new*. Having, said he, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing to both small and great, saying, *none* other things than those which the prophets and Moses DID SAY SHOULD COME; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.—The same fact appears with equal evidence from our Lord's language to the two disciples who were going to Emmaus. O! fools, said he, and slow of heart to believe, all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he EXPOUNDED unto them in all the

the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

From the words I first read, permit me to remind you of THOSE THINGS which Christ suffered, and why he OUGHT to have suffered those things.—Of his entering into his glory, I shall have occasion to say something in the following discourse.

I. Concerning the SUFFERINGS of Christ, I would first of all remark, that whatever he suffered, it was from *others*; never doing any thing HIMSELF, which he wished he had left undone, never leaving any thing unfinished which he desired to perform, never doing that which was disproved of his Father, nor that his friends could justly censure, or his enemies properly condemn.

This excellence of character in Christ, exempted him from those pains which are most tremendous to human nature : for a wounded spirit who can bear ? But then, his character exposed him to many sorrows, which, next

to a guilty conscience, are insupportable. To be hated without a cause, to be rejected without, nay against all reason, and to be put to death for the most benevolent intentions, and actions, by his own nation; this, however we may affect to treat it on speculation, this, in real anguish, must be considered an inconceivable affliction.

But, to form proper notions of the sorrows of Christ, in those things which he suffered on our account, let us descend to particulars, and attend to his amiable temper when he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

It is obvious, that he suffered much in his personal character, in his body, and in his soul; and chiefly from his bearing the full force of that *curse* which was due to the sins of his people. But, we have already observed, his sufferings were from *others*, not from HIMSELF. Let us then distinctly consider, from whom he suffered those things which he so wisely, and so patiently endured.

I. He

1. He suffered much from MEN. In those who were, comparatively speaking, *good* men, he saw there was that degree of unbelief, hardness of heart, and perversity of temper, which he could not behold without that compassion for them which increased his painful sensations.—As the ridicule, and revilings of *bad* men, were a more direct attempt against his ministry, and mission, and, as by them, he was betrayed and crucified, from such men, his sufferings were much augmented: under their hands, his afflictions were, by divine permission, carried to the last extremity.—But, among *these* bad men, the majority of them, were mean and despicable offenders; without honour, without learning, without common sense; slaves to the vilest appetites, prejudices, and passions; men who were driven to any point which their unprincipled leaders wished them to turn; by such miscreants, to be spit upon, blindfolded, smitten, and crucified, these were sufferings which none but the Son of God could have sustained, to answer that end for which he died.—If mighty men did not descend to
such

such illiberal actions, *they* must be considered as the immediate sources of those affronts and abuses, which the Lord of glory received. They took counsel against him, and, by their iniquitous decisions, delivered him up into the hands of their contemptible creatures.—In short, as those *individuals*, who possessed every bad quality which our nature will admit, threw something into that cup which our Lord was ordained to drink, so *collective* bodies of men, both Jews and Gentiles, added so many bitters to the nauseous draught, that we cannot conceive how either folly, or madness, could have made it more irksome to humanity.

2. From *evil* ANGELS, the sufferings of Jesus Christ was attended with additional aggravations. Either by their direct temptations, or by the influence of their suggestions, our Redeemer was very much molested.—Of the first of these afflictions, we have taken perhaps sufficient notice in a former discourse*. Of the second, I presume

* Sermon VI.—On the Temptations of Christ.

the current doctrine of the scriptures, in reference to the influence of evil angels over bad men, to be well known.—Add to this, the rebuke that was given to Peter, and what is said of the fall of Satan, and you will conclude, that what our Lord suffered from such agents was very grievous. But,

3. The most affecting view of the sufferings of the Son of God, is that which exhibits him as *immediately* suffering from his FATHER. We are told, he spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all; that it pleased him to put him to grief, and to make his soul an offering for sin. All that Christ suffered was undoubtedly under divine direction; but those sufferings which were most grievous seem to have proceeded more immediately from his father's vengeance, than uninstructed, we should have dared to have thought. Yet when we attend to such expressions as these, He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy—My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death—O! my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me—

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My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? we must, I think, conclude, that what Christ suffered from the vengeance of his Father, was much more than all he either felt or feared from angels and from men. Beneath that stroke which smote the shepherd of Israel, and scattered his sheep, our Lord expired; and, from the nature, manner, and circumstances of his death, we may conclude, no sorrow was ever like, or equal to his sorrow, and that the blessings of his grace are proportioned to the merit of his oblation.

But, as the sufferings of Christ are essential to our peace, it may be worth our while to take some notice of those things which he suffered during the last week in which he dwelt among us in this present evil world: since in that, according to the prediction of Daniel, he finished transgression, and made an end of sin; made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

On the *first* day of this memorable week,
which

which is now called SUNDAY, our Lord made his public entrance into Jerusalem, in the manner which had been foretold by Zechariah. He was met by a very great multitude, who spread their garments in the way, and by others, who cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee. But our Lord, to shew that his kingdom was not of this world, went, not to the palace, but to the temple, where it seems, the merchants and money-changers had ventured to return. They were again driven out, and several miraculous cures were performed. At the proceedings of this day, which was afterwards called *Palm Sunday*, the chief priests and scribes were much displeased. Our Lord having rebuked them for their pride and unbelief, went out
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of the city, to Bethany, to the house of Lazarus, and lodged there.—Of the transactions of this day it is said, These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

On the *second* day, which is now called **MONDAY**, Jesus returned again to Jerusalem, and taught in the temple. It was in his way thither that the fruitless fig-tree was cursed. Jesus said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. Now his zeal for his own house, was very conspicuous. Is it not written, said he, My house shall be called of all nations, the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine. And when the evening was come,
he

he went out of the city, and returned again to Bethany.

On the *third* day, which is now called **TUESDAY**, a third time our Lord went up into the temple ; and, it is supposed, that it was on this journey his disciples looking on the barren fig-tree, said, How soon is the fig-tree withered away !—While our Lord was preaching this day in the temple, the scribes, pharisees, and sadducees, proposed to him many ensnaring questions ; who were each of them answered according to their folly. Exasperated at the wisdom of Christ in his answers and parables, they sought to lay hands on him ; but they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.—In the afternoon of this day, as Christ departed from the temple in order to return to Bethany, he seated himself with his disciples, on mount Olivet, from whence he had a full view of that magnificent structure. In this situation, one of his disciples said to him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here. Jesus replied, Seest thou these

these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.—Having, in strong terms, foretold the approaching and utter destruction of Jerusalem, and his second coming, he went, as usual, with his disciples to Bethany, and supped in the house of Simon the Leper. Here he washed his disciples feet; and here also he informed them of the treachery of Judas. Of this we read in the words of our text, which were first uttered on that **TUESDAY** evening of which I am now speaking; and from the context, it appears, that the treason of Judas was then distinctly pointed out.

On the *fourth* day, which is now called **WEDNESDAY**, some have supposed that our Lord continued wholly at Bethany. In the mean time, the Grand Council, or Sanhedrim of the Jews, assembled at the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, where they had a strenuous debate how they might take Jesus and put him to death. This was the second council they held on this iniquitous occasion.

Many

Many of them thought it not safe to proceed to violence, as the passover was now at hand, and as they feared that coercion might occasion a tumult among the people. While they were in deep dispute, Judas came amongst them, and put an end to their altercations, by promising to deliver Christ into their hands. The proposal met with their acceptance; and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, called shekels of the sanctuary, amounting to three pounds fifteen shillings of our money. Thus was fulfilled a remarkable prophecy of Zechariah, who had said, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear: so they weighed for my price, thirty pieces of silver. The prophet added, And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I am valued at of them.—A goodly price indeed! The usual price which in those days was given for a slave! The prophet, however, or he whom he speaks of, took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

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On the *fifth* day, which is now called THURSDAY, as the Apostles knew that the passover would commence that evening at sun-set, they desired our Lord to say, where he would eat it. He gave them an uncommon, but a very explicit answer. They obeyed his mandate, and, at the appointed time, sat down with him at the fourth, and last passover, in that upper chamber which was made ready for their reception. After the paschal repast, Christ instituted what is now called the Lord's Supper ; not as a *mere* memorial of himself, but as a feast upon a sacrifice. These transactions, with the many affecting exhortations that accompanied this sacred appointment, took up so much time, that it is reasonable to suppose the night was pretty far advanced before our Lord left Jerusalem. Yet, by the favour of the moon, which was then in the full, he, with the *eleven*, passed over the brook Cedron into the garden of Gethsemane. This garden was at the foot of mount Olivet, about a mile from Jerusalem ; a place to which, it was well known, our Lord frequently resorted. Judas, who
knew

knew as well as the other disciples, whither his master would retire, procured a band of soldiers and officers, from the chief priests, and, with this company at his heels, rudely broke in upon his sacred retirement ; saluted him, seized him, bound him, and took him, first, to Annas, and next, to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest : where the whole body of the Sanhedrim was assembled. They had previously determined on the death of Christ ; who, by the treachery of Judas, was thus delivered into their hands : and, as the passover was approaching, (for the Jews kept it this year, on the FRIDAY evening,) they hasted to bring forward that question which it was agreed Caiaphas should propose. It was conceived in these terms : I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, THOU HAST SAID. Instantly our Lord was considered as a blasphemer, adjudged to be guilty of death, and left the remaining part of that night in the *Common-hall*, to suffer all those insults which the high priest's servants, and the soldiers, thought

proper to inflict. In this situation, Peter denied his master, as our Lord had predicted. But having said to Simon, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : while thus suffering, our Lord looked upon him with divine compassion. Peter caught the piercing glance. The cock crew. His conscience smote him. Abashed and confounded, Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

On the *sixth* day, which is now called FRI-DAY, early in the morning, the Sanhedrim met in their council-room, in the temple. Thither they brought Jesus from the *Common-hall*. He was now examined a second time by the Sanhedrim ; who soon hurried him away to the *Prætorium*, or palace of Pontius Pilate. This Roman governor, though an infamous man, and ripe in wickedness, at first, refused to condemn Jesus Christ. He said to the chief priests, and to the people, I find no fault in this man. He sent him, however, to Herod, the *Tetrarch*, of Galilee, who was then at Jerusalem, it being the time of the Passover. Pilate not only meant by
this

this action to gratify the curiosity of Herod, who was desirous to see him of a long season, but wished to hear his opinion of Jesus Christ: and, as Pilate was told he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, there was a sufficient colour for his taking this step. Herod asked our Lord many questions; but he answered him nothing. Finding himself totally disappointed, for he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him, Herod, with his men of war, set him at nought, mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

On our Lord's return, Pilate called the priests, rulers, and people, to the *gate* of the Judgment-hall, for they would not enter into it lest they should be defiled? Here Pilate again declared, that he had found no fault in Jesus, touching those things whereof they had accused him. He added, No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. But willing somewhat to gratify the Jews, he proposed to scourge Christ, and to let him go. This pro-

posal was rejected. Pilate therefore made another, which some think was addressed chiefly to the people. This was, that since they had a custom of having a prisoner released at the passover, it should be at their option whether it was now to be *JESUS*, or *Barabbas*. But though *Barabbas* had been guilty of murder, robbery, and sedition, yet, at the instigation of their priests and rulers, the people preferred *Barabbas*, and loudly requested that *JESUS* might be crucified.

Such precaution, from a man like Pilate, was unexpected. But, among other things which made him uneasy, he received a message from his wife, who said, Have thou nothing to do with that just man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him. But, however the cruelty of Pilate was checked, it brake out with sufficient force to make his name odious to the latest posterity. He gave orders that *Jesus* should be scourged ; a punishment which the Romans abhorred, and would only permit to be inflicted on their *slaves*. After this corporal

ral punishment, by men who were not inclined to compassion, Christ was again taken into the Judgment-hall, stripped of his own garment, a loose purple coat was thrown upon him, a wreath of thorns was put on his head, a reed in his hand, and, in derision, the rabble said unto him, HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS! Thus they mocked at real Majesty, while the shadow of it in Pilate was revered! They spat on our Lord's face, struck him on the cheek, with the palms of their hands, and on his head with a reed, or cane!

Pilate conceiving that an object, thus oppressed and degraded, might excite compassion, went out of his palace to the Jews, who still attended at the *gate*; and bringing Jesus forth unto the people, he said, BEHOLD THE MAN! But, as before, they cried out, CRUCIFY HIM! adding, to account for their rage, that he had called himself THE SON OF GOD. Alarmed at these words, Pilate ordered Jesus to return into the *Prætorium*, and examined him on this additional charge: but the Jews, to terrify Pilate, told him, that

Christ had also affirmed he was a *king*, and that if he let this man go, he was an enemy to CÆSAR. As this Roman governor well knew the jealous temper of TIBERIUS, he was now resolved at all events, to gratify the Jews. He brought therefore our Lord unto another place of judgment, called *Gabbatha*, or the Pavement, and there passed upon him the sentence of condemnation: washing at the same time his hands in the public court, and saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

Christ being thus condemned had new indignities and griefs to suffer. His cross was laid upon him, which he was compelled to carry till he was ready to faint under his burden; then, though, not released from it, he obtained some assistance. In this painful procession, our Lord passed through one of the principal streets of Jerusalem to the joy of its abandoned inhabitants, and to the anguish, and almost despair, of his weeping followers

lowers and friends. Thus was he led out of what had been long called the *Holy-city*, as an *accursed* thing, to the hill *Golgotha*, or *Calvary*, where, after a torrent of abuses, he was crucified between two thieves !

It was about the *sixth* hour, or twelve o'clock on the FRIDAY, they began to nail our Lord to his cross, on which he was suspended to the *ninth* hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon ; when, after having endured what cannot be expressed, after praying for his enemies, and committing himself into the hands of his Father, he bowed his head, said, IT IS FINISHED, and yielded up the ghost !

Of the purpose to break his bones on the cross, which was prevented, and of the piercing of his side in that situation, which was permitted, I shall not now make any remarks ; but close the account of this eventful day with the following observations.

During the last agonies of Christ, the whole frame of nature seemed to be disordered. The
sun

sun was darkened. The stars appeared ; and that great eclipse which made them visible, was unusual ; because the moon was not then in *conjunction*, but in the *full*. The darkness, it is said, was noticed and recorded, by Pagan writers. The exclamation of DIONYSIUS, the *Areopagite*, has often been quoted to this effect :—Either, said he, the God of Nature is suffering ; or the frame of the world is dissolving. This uncommon eclipse was accompanied with an earthquake which rent the rocks asunder. The graves of the dead were opened, and the bodies of the saints appeared to many in Jerusalem. The vail of the temple, which separated the sacred mysteries from the eyes of the people, was also rent in two, from the top to the bottom ; shewing that God had forsaken his former residence, and put a final end to the theocratical state.—Thus were the types and prophecies fulfilled, and the dying words of Christ, IT IS FINISHED, confirmed. Thus, that glorious sun of righteousness set in a very dark and stormy sky ; but, by his sufferings, he made perfect reconciliation for the sins of his

his people, and purchased to himself in them a peculiar possession; on which he entered when he rose from the dead, and in which he will dwell for ever*.

II. Having seen what things our Lord suffered, let us now consider, why he OUGHT to have suffered these things.—But so much has been detailed in the preceding part of this discourse, that on this article, I have only time to add the following arguments :

1. From what we have seen of the character of Christ, we may infer, that if HE suffered these things, it *became* him thus to suffer; for it ever was a principle with him to do what became him. He intimated as much to John, at the commencement of his public

* This account of the Passion Week, though abridged and imperfect, may be sufficient to convince the reader, that an accurate and full statement of this remarkable period of the sufferings of Christ, would make an affecting essay. What is here thrown together, is chiefly taken from, *The Scripture History of the Jews*, written by JAMES HOME, Esq, ADVOCATE, Vol. I. p. 268—279.

ministry,

ministry, and he met with nothing which for a moment produced in him a different disposition.—On any other, or opposite notion, the sufferings of the Son of God could yield the intelligent no satisfaction. For if he suffered those things which he ought *not* to have suffered, how could they confide in him, or expect from his stripes to be healed?

2. If salvation is of God, and of sovereign grace, which we firmly believe, it must be accomplished in that way, by those means, and to answer that end which he approves; but Christ, in giving himself for his people, was an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour. In redemption, the Father approves of nothing but in reference to his oblation. This fact was thus foretold: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offering, and sin-offering, hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart,

3. If

3. If God hath decreed to save sinners by a SURETY, if he hath declared his irrevocable decree, and if in that declaration it appears, that his son *alone* is appointed to that office, and that he who is the captain of our salvation, was to be made perfect through sufferings, then he ought to have suffered, even unto death; but that all this is revealed we firmly believe; the argument therefore to us is of force; since on these principles only, we can expect redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

4. If Christ ought to have engaged in this arduous business, (and who can say he ought *not* to have made himself responsible?) surely, it became him to fulfil his own engagements. Foolish and wicked engagements should be dissolved; conditional engagements may be revoked; and he that engages to do that which it is impossible for him to perform, may well expect to fail: but such is the responsibility of Jesus Christ, that it cannot be dissolved or revoked; nor can it fail.

fail. Therefore, said he, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have *power* to lay it down, and I have *power* to take it again.

5. If Christ was not a competent judge what he ought to do and suffer, to whom shall we go for settled satisfaction on this business? But, though his judgment was against himself, it is certain, he did judge it became him to suffer all these things.—He knew how much the law had been violated, what inexcusable transgressors deserved, what the honour of divine government required, what misery believers in his mediation would escape by faith in his atonement, what felicity likewise they would obtain, and how much, and how justly, those would be confounded, who chose to be enemies to that grace which bringeth salvation. In such light, and greater, he became our SURETY, and fulfilled his engagements: and why should we object to such abounding grace? We admit, that sufferings
are

are essential to our safety ; but till we approach the cross of Christ, who amongst us can discover those sufferings on which it is safe for sinners to confide, or in which it is possible for men of good sense to glory ?

To conclude : It is from the sufferings of Jesus Christ that we best learn the guilt of man, and the grace of God ; the holiness of the divine nature, and the pollution of our own ; the safety of believers, and the danger of them who live in unbelief.—What manner of persons *ought* we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness ? This is a question suited to our subject. But take heed lest you give it a wrong turn. This is very common. To prevent it, consider by whose assistance we ought to *endeavour* to be that which adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour. Often let us indulge the thought ; and may it please God to command his blessing ! AMEN !

SERMON

S E R M O N XIII.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

1 COR. XV. 20.

BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND
BECOME THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT.

WE have seen that Christ *ought* to have suffered those things which he patiently endured ; and we shall, I hope, be convinced, that when his sufferings ceased, it became him to enter into his glory.

Our Lord, as the Son of God, had a glory with his Father, before the world was : but his human nature could not enter into glory, till it was raised from the dead. In this assumed nature, he became obedient unto death ;

death ; but it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

On the FRIDAY after *Palm-Sunday*, our Lord yielded up the Ghost. All the SATURDAY he continued in the grave, and the next morning early, he rose from the dead. His resurrection may be considered as the first step of his exaltation, or entrance into that joy that was set before him. His glory as the Son of God, was prior to his Incarnation, and independent of it : but his glory as the only mediator between God and man, stood on a very different foundation. This office demanded from him that obedience, and required of him those sufferings, which could only be paid and born in the present evil world : and, when they were finished, it was expedient that he should rise from the dead, see his seed, prolong his days, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand.

The resurrection of Christ may be considered as a fact, and as a fact of the greatest importance : and it is my intention to take

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some notice of it in each of these views, in the present discourse.

I. The resurrection of Christ may be considered as a FACT.

All facts admit of evidence : but the evidence of facts will ever be as various as their nature. It is as absurd to require the same evidence for different facts, as it is silly to suppose, we are bound to believe any thing which is absolutely inevident, or without having sufficient reason to convince us of its existence. That which may be numbered, we should number. That which may be weighed, we should weigh. That which may be measured, we should measure. But those things which depend on taste, or testimony, we must judge of by a different standard.

The fact of our Lord's resurrection is of the most *unusual* kind ; for if he be risen from the dead, it must be admitted that his resurrection was MIRACULOUS. But then, from the nature and importance of this fact, we derive
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a considerable advantage in point of evidence. For the *internal* evidence of this event is so strong, that the *external* testimony which is added to it, comes down to us with double force. Let us attend to *both*.

1. The *internal* evidence of our Lord's resurrection is that which relates to the necessity and utility of this miraculous event. Now, where the *subject* of a MIRACLE makes so essential a part in the œconomy of the revealed dispensation, as to give *it* its completion; the want of *which* would destroy the whole, and render it *vain* and *fruitless*; the NECESSITY of such a miracle must be admitted: but *such* a MIRACLE is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As this is more ably argued by a writer of considerable reputation than it is in my power to perform, I will give you the substance of his thoughts, on this interesting subject, in his own words.—From this moment, till I give you notice of the close, you will listen to him, and not to me.

“ Jesus had a two-fold character : the one, of a messenger from God *simply*, with the tidings of salvation : the other, of a messenger promised, under the title of the *Messiah*. His credentials, under each of these characters, were *miracles*. Those worked by him in his life, as credentials, referred to a divine messenger *simply* : that of the resurrection, at his death, respected his other character of *Messiah*, or a divine messenger *promised* : and the *necessity* of this miracle may be seen even from hence, that the ancient prophets had foretold it.—The very *nature* of the CHRISTIAN dispensation likewise, required of *necessity*, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christianity is the restoration of lapsed and forfeited man, to life and immortality, from the power and dominion of death. But the course of human nature continuing the same, after this restoration, which it held before ; and death still visibly existing, though it had lost its sting, there seemed to be need of some *sensible* evidence, to evince the truth of this entire change of the order of things. And this restoration being procured at the price of the

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the death and sufferings of Christ, sacrificed on the cross ; when the price was paid, and paid thus *visibly*, the nature of the compact demanded, that the benefit should be as *visibly* possessed and enjoyed ; and both one and the other, openly exemplified in the *same* person. If the REDEEMER himself was not seen to enjoy the fruits of the redemption procured, what HOPES had remained for the rest of mankind ? Would not the natural conclusion have been, that the expedient of *Redemption*, by the death and sacrifice of Jesus, had proved ineffectual ? This is the conclusion which Saint Paul himself makes : IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN, YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS : SO necessarily connected, in his opinion, was THIS MIRACLE with the very essence of the *Christian* religion. But now, adds the apostle, is Christ risen, and become the FIRST fruits of them that slept ; i. e. his resurrection is the thing which both *assured* and *sanctified* all that were to follow. For the Jewish *first fruits*, to which the expression alludes, were of the

nature, and secured the *plenty*, of the approaching harvest.

But, in matters of religion, as that which is *necessary* in one view, is never without its *uses* and *expediences* in another, it may be proper to illustrate this truth before we proceed,

The heathen world had a general notion of *another life*. But the resurrection of this mortal body never once entered into their imagination.—Nay, so little did the doctrine of the resurrection of the body enter into their most improved conceptions, that when at Athens, the very seat of science, St. Paul preached JESUS *and the* RESURRECTION, they took the second enunciation to be, like the first, a new DIVINITY, a certain goddess called *Anastasis*.

With all their prejudices, so unfavourable to the resurrection of the body, nothing less than the best attested MIRACLE in confirmation of it, could have reconciled the Gentile world to the credibility of so incredible a doctrine.

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This may be said with the greater confidence, since St. Paul himself, on this occasion, appears to have been of the same opinion. For when he had rectified their mistake concerning JESUS and the RESURRECTION, and had given them a precise account of the doctrine of the gospel, in which he explained to them, that the *resurrection* meant *a resurrection from the dead*, he add.—*whereof God hath given* ASSURANCE, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD.

Thus hath this capital MIRACLE, the *seal* of our Redemption, all the evidence for its truth, which can arise either from its *necessity*, or its *use*. It was proclaimed by the public decrees of the Father; and accomplished to verify the character of the Son, and to facilitate the progress of his gospel. Causes so important, that we can conceive none more worthy the care of the Lord of the Universe; viz. than that what had been promised, should be fulfilled; and what was now preached, should be miraculously confirmed.

After so strong *internal* evidence to prove it *right and fit to be done*, all that was wanting to establish it, was the *external*, to prove it *actually done* : and this St. Paul pours out with a very liberal hand*."

2. Here, I close my quotation : and if these remarks meet with your applause, the *external* evidence of the resurrection of Christ will be better understood : and, I will venture to say, while they are properly esteemed, the minute objections which infidels make to the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, will not disturb your peace ; nor will you be drawn by them, into frivolous controversies and absurd disputes.

* This long quotation is taken from Bishop Warburton's discourse On the Resurrection, in the quarto edition of his works, vol. V. p. 473.—As his works are but little known among the generality of my acquaintance, and as some of my friends are prejudiced against that learned prelate, by the licentious effusions of an immoral poet, and by the outcries of enthusiasts, I was the more willing to do him justice in my connections.—A man, in my opinion, that will be revered, when all his enemies, the mighty and the mean, are either forgotten, or mentioned with disgust.

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When the witnesses to a common fact vary, in unessential circumstances, from one another, it is sometimes, though not always, a diminution to its credit. For human testimony being that on which *alone* it stands, whatever impeaches THAT, weakens the credibility of the fact. But, in an act *miraculous*, the first ground of its stability being its *internal* evidence, where human testimony hath realized that, such variety takes little from its credit, which stands upon those *two* supports: the testimony that the thing was done, resting on the strong foundation, that it was fit and necessary to be done*.

Of the *external* evidence of this fact, I shall only further observe, we meet with the same witnesses of it, in general, that have been already introduced in these Lectures†. When we consider their number, which exceeds five hundred, the influence which our Redeemer's resurrection had upon their own minds, and, by their preaching, and the

* BP. WARBURTON.

† See SERMON VII.

power of the Holy Ghost, on the minds of others, and that all this had been, for time immemorial, the subject of the most sacred predictions, the evidence is complete. For, if these things may be rationally rejected, it is impossible to say what kind of evidence, on the same subject, could be rationally received.

II. The resurrection of Christ may be considered as a fact of the greatest IMPORTANCE.

For if Christ be not risen, then, saith Paul, to the Corinthians, is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God ; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ :—but if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. He adds, If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable : and concludes irresistably, in the words of our text, But now is Christ

Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

Such were the arguments used by St. Paul, to confirm the reality, and importance of our Lord's resurrection from the dead : but they were urged by him, with becoming dignity ; without being either minute, or tedious ; which may teach us, that when we have done justice to any subject peculiar to revelation, we may safely leave it, without attempting to gratify the claims of impertinence, or the folly of the foolish ; and without being terrified at the appearance of idle objections.

We may be much better employed ; and shall be so, if we recollect, that when Christ rose from the dead, he who was delivered for our offences, rose again for our justification, to be himself the ground of our greatest triumph.—Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died ; yea, rather that is risen again ; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. These are glad tidings. Embrace them, and you will

will bid defiance to delusion and despair. But, should you reject the gospel, delusive hopes will gain admittance into your minds, and when they are chased away, you will be abandoned to extreme distress.

But you know, my brethren, that when Christ rose from the dead, he was then declared to be the Son of God with power, and made it evident he was possessed of that power, by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself; of that power that shall bring to pass the saving that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory!

Nevertheless remember, that as believers are begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and from it expect complete salvation, they who believe unto the saving of the soul, *exercise* themselves to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God, and towards man. Nor forget, that they who were buried with Christ, by baptism, into death, were thus buried, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead,

dead, by the glory of the father, even so they also should walk in newness of life.

What that walk is, you may learn from the sixth of Romans, and the third of Philip-pians. In the latter, to be made *conformable to the death of Christ*, seems to be the proper, and peculiar fruit of his resurrection: but what we are to understand by that phrase, or how a blessing of such importance is to be enjoyed by us, you will not now expect me to say.—I shall only add, seeing as believers, ye are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. AMEN!

APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X

T O

S E R M O N XIII.

As these discourses are *now* addressed to the eye, and not to the ear, a Postscript, or an Appendix, may occasionally be admitted without impropriety.

The occasion of the present Appendix was some recent reflections on these words, BEING MADE CONFORMABLE TO HIS DEATH. Having mentioned this duty, at the close of the preceding sermon, as the proper, and peculiar fruit of our Lord's resurrection, I have ventured to add a few thoughts upon it in this place.

It is a mistake to imagine that any person
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can be conformable to the death of Christ who is not a believer in him. Formerly, to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believed on his name. The same order is still preserved; and out of it, neither our communion with Christ, nor our being made conformable to his death, can be rationally expected.

It is also a mistake to imagine, that our acting agreeably to the death of Christ should be confined by us, either to our repentance, or rejoicing, or to any one temper, or duty, belonging to Christianity. The death of Jesus Christ was undoubtedly designed to answer many important ends; and he that would magnify some of them to depreciate the rest, acts inconsistently with the perfection of that atonement, and is likely to injure others by his contracted disposition.

It is a mistake still more pernicious to aim, if I may so express it, to be more conformable to the death of Christ, than the leading purpose

pose of his oblation will admit. Of his atonement it may be said, Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it. If, therefore, any man conceives he is to fill up that which is said to be behind of the afflictions of Christ, by the *merit* of his own sufferings, he indulges a gross mistake; deprives himself of that joy and peace which proper thoughts of the vicarious sufferings of Christ produce, and of that genuine, and pleasing humility which they bring forth.

It is likewise a mistake to imagine that even believers can be conformable to the death of Christ by their own unassisted efforts: they are, all of them, inadequate to this effect; and if they were not, the consequence of succeeding by their own power, would, in no wise agree with the design of our being redeemed from sin and death by Jesus Christ; which is, that no flesh should glory in the presence of God; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Yet, it is a mischievous mistake for
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any believer to imagine he should ever cease from exerting his best endeavours to be more and more conformable to the death of Christ. Paul, after long and eminent acquaintance with him, did not think himself perfect; but still endeavoured to apprehend that for which he himself had been apprehended. This one thing, said he, I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let me now add, that, in my opinion, some of the most important instances of our being conformable to the death of Christ, are in our having proper views of sin and grace, of duty, of our own sufferings, and our own departure.

Our views of *sin* are conformable to the death of Christ, when we believe it is by us inexpressible, and that while it dwelleth in us, it ever is without excuse; when we believe there is not any sin irremissible to him who receives the atonement; none which cannot

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be mortified through the Spirit, none that shall have real dominion over him who is not under the law, but under grace.

Our views of *grace* are conformable to the death of Christ, when we believe that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.—With these views of sin and of grace, we shall perceive that when we esteem the latter, we are as welcome to enjoy it as the Apostles themselves; and, thus encouraged, we shall conclude, that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.

Our views of *duty* are conformable to the death of Christ, when we believe that the law of the spirit of life which is in him, hath made us free from the law of sin and death; when we perceive that what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, by sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, hath done, and hath condemned sin in
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the flesh of Christ, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.—As, with proper evidence, we believe these things, our duty will be rightly placed, and well performed: it will be done unto the Lord, and for his glory, with cheerfulness, and with humility; and therefore, comparatively speaking, it will be vigorous, extended, and lasting.

Our views of those *sufferings* to which, as Christians, we may be exposed, are conformable to the death of Christ, when they are surveyed with the same judgment, and sustained in the same spirit, that so happily distinguished the primitive believers. They reckoned that their sufferings were not worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed in them. They believed it was better, if such was the will of God, that they should suffer for well-doing than for evil doing. They rejoiced therefore, inasmuch as they were partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory should be revealed, they might be glad with exceeding

joy. In short, they suffered as real Christians, both in respect of the cause of their sufferings, and in respect of their tempers : they were not therefore ashamed of the cross of Christ, but glorified God in their most fiery trials, and tremendous temptations.

Lastly ; our views of our own *departure* are conformable to the death of Christ, when we believe that through death, he has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; when we believe that the sting of death is thus removed, and that by the invincible power of our risen Redeemer, death shall be swallowed up in victory.—May we every day renew and enlarge our acquaintance with him that died for our sins according to the scriptures, and so know him, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, as to be able to say, For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain! AMEN!

SERMON

S E R M O N XIV.

ON THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

EPHESIANS iv. 10.

HE THAT DESCENDED IS THE SAME ALSO THAT ASCENDED UP, FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS.

AT the Incarnation, the heavenly host praised the Almighty, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men : and, when our Lord ascended, creatures the most exalted and depressed, again rejoiced in God with superior satisfaction.

David, prophecying of this blissful event, said, The chariots of God are twenty thousand

sand, even thousands of angels : the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. He added, Thou hast ascended on high ; thou hast led captivity captive : thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them.

In another place, speaking of the same event, he said, God is gone up with a shout, the Lord, with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises : sing praises to our king, sing praises.—Nor are his ardent expressions in the twenty-fourth psalm, inferior to these, either in eloquence, or in their evangelical importance.

The words of our text are taken from the sixty-eighth psalm. In it, the *person* who ascended, the *sublimity* of his ascent, and the *grace* which he displayed on his ascension, are equally conspicuous.—These are subjects worth your notice ; and, on each of them, I wish to say something worthy of your attention in this lecture.

I. Let

I. Let us take some notice of the PERSON who ascended.

This was the *same* that descended; and, from what has been delivered, in a former lecture, on the Incarnation of Christ, you are, I hope, convinced that this person *was*, and is, THE SON OF GOD.

There is something wonderfully grand in *personal* existence. Things inanimate, and creatures irrational, may be more numerous, vast, varied, and externally brilliant than persons; but they are none of them equal in dignity, none of them equal in duration, to the children of men.

Amongst those who are possessed of personal excellence, we are accustomed to speak of three orders; human, angelic, and divine. Of the latter, we have heard of no more than THREE persons: and of *these*, it is the SECOND person, who is IMMANUEL, God with us, of whom the Apostle speaketh in our text.

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It is inconceivable, that a person of such dignity should, in the eye of unerring judgment, diminish the excellence of his personal character, by doing, or suffering that, which was the effect of wisdom, and which involved in it an incontestible proof of divine compassion. We may therefore be confident, that the Incarnation made no change in the *person* of the Son of God. If he made himself of no reputation, by taking upon him the form of a servant, it was in the eyes of *men*, not in the estimation of his FATHER : and even in the eyes of *men*, it was only in the opinion of the *carnal* that he was considered of no account ; for *others*, even before his ascension, said, We beheld his glory, (the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

It was not, however, till after his sufferings, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, that the glory of the person of Christ was generally understood ; nor was he *then*, nor is he *now*, adored by any man, but by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord said,

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HE SHALL GLORIFY ME: and, we may be confident, that Christ is not yet glorified by any of us, without that instruction which must, in every age, be attributed to him. We are assured, No man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man *can* say, that Jesus is *the* LORD, but by the Holy Ghost.

II. The *sublimity* of our Lord's ascension is next to be considered: and here, I would take some notice of the manner in which he ascended into heaven, and of the nature of his exaltation.

I. The *manner* of our Lord's ascension is thus represented by Luke. In the Acts of the Apostles, he says, The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do, and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also, he shewed himself alive after his passion by many *infallible* proofs, being seen of *them*
forty

forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Thus this inspired writer, by referring to the *gospel*, already written by him to Theophilus, by his resuming his narrative of Christ where he had left it off, and carrying it forward, in a few words, nearly to the time of our Lord's ascension, prepared his devout friend to receive, in a proper manner, his exact account of that event.—Having done this, he thus proceeds :

And, being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, (but still misconceiving of the promised grace) they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons,

sons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Such, according to Luke, was the solemn and seasonable discourse which immediately preceded our Lord's ascension. For he adds, And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartho-

Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.—The number of the names together were about one hundred and twenty.

So much for the *manner* in which our Lord ascended ; which certainly was with a dignity that became his character. To this account of it, given us by Luke, which is at once concise, plain, and strong, I shall make no addition.

2. If thus leaving the manner of our Lord's ascension into heaven, we next consider the *nature* of his exaltation, we shall soon be compelled to say, that it is unspeakably glorious.

When he ascended, soon a cloud received him out of their sight. What followed, we can only know by report from heaven ; and that, though sufficient for our belief, is such

as neither gratifies our curiosity, nor stoops to the level of human apprehension.

We are told indeed, that he ascended up *far above all heavens*; that is, far above the *visible* heavens; those airy and starry regions, which are not concealed from our inspection. Yes, far beyond these our Lord ascended in our own nature, entered into the holiest of all; as the forerunner of his people, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. But, of these expressions, and of others, relative to his exaltation, we must be content to walk by faith, and not dream of walking by sight.

When it is said, that HE who endured the cross, and despised the shame, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God; this assertion, I apprehend, is as much intended to give us just notions of the PERSON of Christ, as of the grandeur of his ascension: and it becomes us continually to consider, that such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and
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made higher than the heavens ; and that the evidence of this fact is now as conspicuous as we have any reason to expect, or have any right to require.

It is pleasing to perceive, that Abraham, Moses, and David, were not ignorant of the dignity of Christ, nor of that display of his glory which now engages our attention. Our Lord said to the Jews, Your father ABRAHAM rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad. If by the word DAY must needs be meant that *characteristic* circumstance of his life, the laying down his life for the redemption of mankind*, it is no wonder, that after Abraham had been thus indulged, he called the name of that place where the favour was granted, Jehovah-jireh ; or that we meet with this promise, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

* See a masterly defence of this exposition of the word DAY, and some judicious remarks on the scenical representation of the sacrifice of Christ, by Abraham's offering up of his only son Isaac, in Bishop Warburton's Works, Vol. III. quarto edition.

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MOSES, speaking of the same object, to the sons of Abraham, four hundred years after this transaction, said, Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's thy God ; the earth also, with all that therein is : and DAVID, six hundred years after Moses, attributes as much as Moses himself, to the person of Jesus Christ. We have seen in the beginning of this discourse, what he said of him, and of his ascension ; and as the language of the eighth psalm may, in certain parts of it, be applied to our Redeemer, it permits us to add, though we see not yet all things put under him, yet we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.

Seeing then, that we have a great high priest, that is *passed into the heavens*, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come
boldly

boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

III. It yet remains to take some notice of the *grace* which our Lord displayed on his ascension.

Of this grace, though we cannot comprehend it, we must, as believers, think highly of it, since we are told, that when he ascended up far above all heavens, it was *that he might fill all things*.

A commentator of established reputation*, thus expounds this important clause : That he might *fill* all things, or *fulfil* all things, that were types of him, or predicted concerning him ; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation, doctrine, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead ; so he ascended on high that he might accomplish what was foretold concerning his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and an-

* DR. GILL.

swer to the type of the high priest's entering once a year into the holiest of all : or that he might compleat, perfect, and fill up all his offices ; as the remainder of his priestly office, his intercession for his people ; and more fully his prophetic office, by the effusion of his spirit ; and more visibly his kingly office, by sending forth the rod of his strength out of *Zion*, and subduing the people under him : or that he might fill all places ; as God, he fills all places at once, being infinite, immense, and omnipresent ; as man, one after another ; at his incarnation he dwelt with men on earth ; at his crucifixion he was lifted up between heaven and earth ; at his death he descended into the lower parts of the earth, into hell, *Hades*, or the grave ; and, at his resurrection, stood upon the earth again, and had all power in heaven and in earth given him ; and at his ascension he went *through* the airy and starry heavens, into the highest heaven ; and so successively, was in all places : or rather that he might fill all persons, all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles ; and so the *Arabic* version renders it, *that he might fill all*

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creatures ;

creatures; as the Gentiles were called; particularly, that he might fill each and every one of his people with his grace and righteousness, with his spirit, and the fruits of it, with spiritual knowledge and understanding, with food and gladness, with peace, joy, and comfort; and all his churches with his gracious presence, and with officers and members, and all with gifts and graces suitable to their several stations and work.

From this copious comment, and from the text itself, it appears, that sin has made that horrid void which could only be filled up by Christ's mediation. Adverting therefore to the promised Messiah, the patriarchs and prophets looked forward to his resurrection, and turned to the strong hold as prisoners of hope. But, from Malachi to John, the hope of Israel was much obscured in Judea. John at length appeared, his voice was heard in the wilderness, and the hopes of them who looked for redemption in Christ revived. At the resurrection of our Lord, the expectation of them that trusted in him, was much enlarged; and,

and, by his ascension, it was filled up and confirmed. The divine decrees, both of judgment and of mercy, were then better understood than in any former period. Then, all the promises of God appeared in Christ to be *yea*, and in him *Amen*, unto the glory of God by those that believed in him. Believers therefore, greatly rejoiced in his ascension, though they who believed not, were vexed to understand the report of that fact, and to hear that salvation was published in his name, and only to be had by his mediation.

May we, my brethren, reflect to our mutual benefit on the evident connection between our Lord's abasement and his being received up into glory; between his unequalled sonship, and his eternal triumph! May we, my brethren, rejoice that there is not any creature which is not manifest in his sight, and that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do! A thought indeed, which might confound us, were not our Lord as gracious

as he is great : but, by his being what he is, his omniscience should be considered by us as a source of unfailing joy ; since, though as sheep we were once going astray, we are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of our souls. For our sufferings, whether we suffer for conscience sake, or under a sense of our own misconduct, are ever before him ; and we have reason to believe, that his power to protect and chastise, to bless and restore, and to lead us into paths of righteousness for his name's sake, is as unbounded as his omnipresence.—May we therefore in belief of this, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God ! AMEN.

APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X

T O

S E R M O N XIV.

WHEN these Lectures were given from the pulpit, there was one discourse On the Session of Christ, from the first verse in the hundred and tenth psalm. The words are, THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD, SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL.

This is the only *subject* of the original Lectures, on which there is not a sermon in the present volume; for though in them, there were twenty-six discourses, yet, as I preached more than one discourse from several of the subjects, *they* are all of them, introduced into

this work, except that which this Appendix states to be deficient; and of this, I shall now observe, that the sermon On the Session of Christ at the right hand of God, turned chiefly on the following observations.

It was said, that the person speaking in the text, was JEHOVAH; that the person addressed, was the ADON, or LORD of David; that when the Pharisees were asked, If David then, call *him* LORD, how is he his SON? No man was able to answer him who asked that question a single word; and that, without we ourselves possessed an unfeigned, and unshaken dependance on divine testimony, we should be as unable to answer the question which Christ proposed, as the Pharisees themselves.

Further; I observed, that from what John had asserted of Jesus Christ*, and from what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had said of angels†, it was manifest, that an an-

* Rev. xxii, 16.

† Heb. i. 13.

swer to our Lord's question was not difficult ; and that the SEAT which he enjoyed, and filled, was peculiar to HIMSELF, as being the ONLY begotten Son of God.

Afterwards, I attempted to prove, that what I had said of the Session of Christ, was expressive of his highest glory, as mediator ; that this glory could not be given to any other ; nor even to Christ, but as incarnate, and when the ends of his Incarnation on earth, had been completely fulfilled.

Finally ; it was asked, Why have we so many proofs of the exaltation of Jesus Christ ? And this question was answered to this effect : that we might be fully convinced all his enemies would be thoroughly subdued though hand joined in hand against him ; that it might be evident his conquest over them would be certain and complete, and that they who received him by faith, would have power from him to become the sons of God in this world, and in the future state,

the pleasure to hear him say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. AMEN !

SERMON

SERMON XV.

ON THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST;

I JOHN II. 1.

MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS WRITE I
UNTO YOU, THAT YE SIN NOT: AND IF ANY MAN
SIN, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER,
JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS.

WHEN any thing of great moment to us depends upon testimony, it is natural to wish that those reports on which we are obliged to rely, may be as clear as the nature of the subject will admit, and such as cannot be contradicted.

John was aware of this, and of what his Christian friends would expect from him. He was careful, therefore, to inform them,
that

that the object of whom he had written in this epistle, was from the *beginning*; and that what he and other Apostles had testified of him, was founded on what they had seen with their eyes, on what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled of the WORD OF LIFE.

Next to such original and authentic information on subjects of such importance, we are pleased with the benevolence of those messengers who make it manifest that their affection for their friends, corresponds with those tidings which they are commissioned to announce. This pleasure the friends of John enjoyed. For, what he wrote to them was written, that they also might have fellowship with him, and with other Apostles: and truly, said he, Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ: so that they had reason to believe him when he added, And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

But as the most absurd inferences, even in
those

those days, were sometimes drawn from the purest and best of sentiments ; and, as from this abuse, alarming notions were propagated to prevent the spread of divine truth, John was disposed to guard his little children in the faith against mistakes and false alarms.—This purpose he pursued, with Christian wisdom, in various parts of this epistle.

The words I first read contain a serious declaration, a mournful supposition, and a provision of indemnity against the mischief supposed. Of each, let us now endeavour to take some notice, in the order they are here placed by John himself.

I. The DECLARATION in our text is in these words : *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.*

After a declaration so serious, it would be highly indecent to insinuate that this beloved and aged Apostle, was not in earnest to guard his Christian friends against yielding to the power of indwelling sin, and against falling
into

into any particular course of iniquity they might be tempted to indulge: and surely, it would be little less indecent to conclude that his doctrines were rather calculated to gratify evil tempers, and to increase immoral actions, among the professors of Christianity, than to promote piety towards God, and purity of conduct between themselves.

But before we listen to such insinuations, which have too much abounded, and which yet abound, let us consider what those things were that John taught believers in Jesus Christ, in order to counteract the progress of sin, and to promote that piety which God approves.

John had said, that God is light, and that in him is no darkness at all. He had observed, if we say, that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. He had also said, that if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and that
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the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

Is it easy, is it possible, to conceive of doctrine more pure, of motives more animating, or of arguments more proper? yet it becomes us to be very cautious, lest we give a wrong turn to any of his words.

When John says, these things write I unto you, *that ye sin not*, we are not to imagine he thought it possible they could, by any means, live entirely without sin. This vain notion neither agrees with the context, the supposition in the text, nor the provision of indemnity against the mischief which is there supposed.—We must distinguish between the body of sin and death in us, which does not depend on our will for its existence, and our indulgence of any of its perverse propensities. St. Paul himself makes this distinction. He said to the believers at Rome, Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. If, said he, ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye,
through

through the SPIRIT, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Indwelling sin in believers, has often been compared to those Canaanites which it was the pleasure of God to leave in the land of promise, to exercise the faith and patience of his peculiar people: and, if the comparison be not pushed too far, it is of admirable use. All illicit alliances with those abominable nations were forbidden; but their best efforts to drive them out were never successful but by the power of God; nor was that intended to be so effectually displayed, that the children of Israel should enjoy uninterrupted rest in an earthly possession. Here lay the trial of their faith. If they were not vigilant, they were always oppressed, and without excuse: but if they were ever so vigilant, they could never completely conquer their detestable opponents.

It becomes us, therefore, to distinguish between our design and the event; between the efforts and the success of our endeavours.

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Our design, and efforts must be *not to sin*; though the effect and success, will never in this world, perfectly correspond with our intentions. Should you say, why are we to have such a design, and to repeat such efforts, when we know before-hand, we shall not perfectly succeed? I answer, these perpetual efforts are required of us, because we know that sin, in all its forms, is inimical to God, and to our salvation; to make any truce or league with it, is to be disloyal; but to wage eternal war with iniquity, vouches for our sincerity, is a proof of a good understanding, and will always be attended with that success, and with that satisfaction in our own minds, that the least relaxation from this duty is unable to impart.

Again; when John said, that *God is Light*; he did not talk as a mere philosopher, but spake as John THE DIVINE. He spake of that light in which sinful men may walk; nay, in which they must walk, if ever they walk with God. But this is no other than the light of RECONCILIATION. For, how
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can two walk together, except they be agreed?
Or how can any of us joy in God, if we
have not received the ATONEMENT?

John pursued his purpose in the words that follow his declaration in our text, as well, and as much, as in those which precede it: and indeed, the one led him to the other. For, having said, If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, he soon adds, My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: but then, to prevent the progress of iniquity in them, he does not subjoin, And if any man sin, we have an *accuser* before God, who will bring us to condemnation: no, the addition is, And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

This unexpected turn in the words of our text, has offended the self-righteous, and the self-sufficient, in all ages. But they who know themselves, and fear God, are thankful for this argument, and feel its beneficial
force.

force. They are persuaded, that the preaching of this doctrine to *believers*, will not make void the law ; and that the publishing of this free grace of God, more effectually wins *them* to forbearance of sin, than any other course that can be taken.

The evidence of this fact is well stated by DOCTOR CRISP*, in his evangelical discourses on the words of my text. The very titles of his sermons raise the believer's expectations ; nor will he, if he can dispense with the stile of them, be disappointed by their contents.

I have always thought it an action that added to the honour of the late DOCTOR GILL, (a man whom I constantly attended from March 1760 to June 1761) that he *edited* the works of DOCTOR CRISP, and the hymns of MR. RICHARD DAVIS. The language of DOCTOR CRISP is inharmonious, and the poetry of MR. DAVIS, very bad ; but as each of these writers were lovers of JESUS CHRIST, and have expressed their concern for his glory, and for the comfort of those

* See his CHRIST ALONE EXALTED, vol. II.

that believe the gospel, in stronger terms than most men living, I mention the care of DOCTOR GILL to preserve their memory, and to shew his regard for such ministers of CHRIST, with pleasure; and, I pray God, I may never be afraid, nor ashamed, to follow, as opportunities occur, his laudable example.

In the close of the *first* of DOCTOR CRISP'S discourses on the words of my text, after having ably proved, that the revelation of grace is no encouragement to sin, the DOCTOR says, " And now, if any person here present, have an evil opinion of the grace of God, as a thing of dangerous consequence, as a licentious doctrine; let them learn from that which has been said, to mend their minds, and correct their judgments; knowing that the Holy Ghost is of another mind; that the revealing of the grace of God is the best way in the world to take men off from sin; so far is it from letting loose the reins to persons to break out into all manner of sinfulness."

II. To that declaration which has thus engaged

gaged our attention, John adds a mournful SUPPOSITION. His words are, *And, if any man sin*; which supposes, not only that every man is liable to sin against God, but the words contain a *concession*, that no man is exempt from the evil of sin.

The context requires this interpretation. For in it, John asserts, If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and his word is not in us. He adds, If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Reason requires the same interpretation: for if Christians, the most eminent of them, confess, they are not exempt from sin in this world, it cannot be thought, that those who are enemies, or strangers to Christianity, are more pure than the followers of Jesus Christ. Yet, in how many places do we read of the imperfections of believers!

It is not only in the context, that John speaks of the imperfection of his brethren. Near the close of this epistle, he says, If any

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man see his *brother* sin a sin which is not unto death; (temporal death, in my opinion, is to be understood) he shall ask, saith John, and he (the Son of God) shall give him life, for them that sin not unto death.

Paul supposed the same depravity to exist among Christians. *Brethren*, said he, to the churches in the region of Galatia, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering *thyself*, lest *thou* also be tempted: and, to the church at Thessalonica, he said, Now we exhort you, *brethren*, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men: and, in his second letter to that church, he said, If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an *enemy*, but admonish him as a *brother*.

But the concessions on this *subject*, are too numerous to be introduced in one discourse.

They

They who are best acquainted with human depravity, never, I believe, pretended they were able to live without sin. They know that the law is spiritual ; that, to justification, it requires the personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience of them who are under it ; that no man has thus obeyed the law of God ; but, on the contrary, that all have sinned, and come short of his glory. They are fully persuaded, that he who has once sinned, can have no rational hope of yielding future perfect obedience to the law of God ; but they are confident, believers are not under the law, but under grace ; that they are complete in Christ, and in him alone ; and that they, who never believe in him, are polluted without relief, and must perish without redemption.

It is true, when a sinner receives the atonement, he has peace with God, and expects to grow in grace : but still, it is equally true, that the most eminent Christians are, of all men, the most sensible of indwelling sin, the most suitably affected with it, and far more than others willing to confess, that in their

flesh dwelleth no good thing. Their confessions are sincere, constant, and extended to the iniquity of their holy things. No advance in the divine life prevents their future abasement of themselves in the sight of God, or their still saying to him, If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand!

III. What then is the provision of INDEMNITY against the mischief which is here supposed; against the evil of sin, which the Christian owns is ever present with him, even when he would do good? It is this: *we have an advocate with the Father.*

It is not said barely, there *is* an advocate; but that we *have* one, every one of *us*; not have had, or may have, but *now* have, *ever* have; not an advocate with other *advocates*, but with the FATHER; and that our advocate with him, is Jesus Christ the righteous.—These gracious words, which may be considered as the opening of the fountain for
sin,

sin, and for uncleanness, deserve our distinct and deliberate attention.

I. It is said, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE.

Some have disputed whether Christ is an advocate for any person who does not believe in him ; distinguishing between his intercession and his pleading for his clients ; but there can be no dispute worth our notice, whether any but *believers* can ENJOY this office of his mediation. That he intercedes for *all* his ELECT, and that all who believe in him are properly his clients, and may ever look up to him for deliverance, it is the glory of the gospel to report, it is the believer's duty to assert, and his happiness to know, that when he does this, he cannot be contradicted.

An advocate among men, is a person who is regularly called to plead the cause of another in a court of justice. In every court of justice in this country, there must be, it seems, at least, *three* constituent parts ; the *actor*, *reus*, and *judex* : the *actor* or plaintiff, who complains of an injury done ; the *reus*,

or defendant, who is called upon to make satisfaction for it; and the *judex*, or judicial power, which is to examine the truth of the fact, to determine the law arising upon that fact, and, if any injury appears to have been done, to ascertain, and by its officers, to apply the remedy.

The learned judge*, from whose commentaries these words are quoted, says, It is also usual, in the superior courts, to have attorneys, and advocates, or counsel, as assistants. He adds, Of advocates, or (as we generally call them) counsel, there are two species, or degrees; barristers, and serjeants. Of the latter, how antient and honourable this state and degree is, the form, splendor, and profits attending it, have been, he observes, fully displayed by many learned writers.

To this ancient and honourable office, there is probably an allusion in our text:—though some have supposed, there is nothing illustrates the matter more than the *residence* of some eminent persons from distant pro-

* BLACKSTONE.

vinces,

vinces, in the courts of great princes, or states, whose business it was constantly to negotiate with them the affairs of those whom they represented, to vindicate them from any unjust aspersions, and to advance their interest to the utmost of their power.*

But, my opinion is, whatever is alluded to in civil life, there is not any thing in the transactions of men which gives us a perfect notion of the advocateship of Jesus Christ. It is a due attention to the *difference* of things which contributes most of all to enlarge and correct the human understanding. In most of those similitudes by which Christ is commended to our attention in the scriptures, it will be found that his pre-eminence is more conspicuous from the implied *disparity* in them, than from the partial agreement.

Our Lord, as an advocate, pleads the cause of penitent sinners to procure their just and complete discharge. Now, there are but two ways by which persons can be acquitted in judgment when charged with any crime. The

* Doctor Dodderidge, on 1 John ii. 1.

one is, by pleading and proving, they are not guilty. The other is, by pleading and proving, that though there is guilt, full satisfaction hath been made. Either of these ways, in a court of *justice*, are sufficient to procure a full discharge. The first of them our advocate does not pursue. No, he acknowledges his clients have committed crimes, and that their offences are without excuse: but, in the second, is the strength of his invincible plea: which is, that though crimes which cannot be defended have been repeatedly committed by his clients, he HIMSELF hath made ample satisfaction; made it, that they might walk in newness of life, and cleave to him, their patron, with purpose of heart.

2. It is said, We have an advocate WITH THE FATHER.

This addition, *with the Father*, is of great force. For it supposes, that our advocate pleads and is heard in that *supreme* court where the decision is final, and from which there can be no appeal.

Further;

Further; these words *with the Father*, remind us of that relation which subsists between him who is JUDGE OF ALL, and him who is our patron in his presence. Just before our Lord left this world, he said to Mary Magdalene, Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend to *my* Father and *your* Father, and to *my* God and *your* God. From this relation between the Father and the Son, and those for whom he pleads, what favour may not be expected! Be not afraid; but, as directed, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

It may not be amiss to remark, from the clause which is now before us, that it is evident, the office of an advocate did not *make* Christ the Son of God, and that his intercession doth not *make* his Father gracious. As a Son, our Lord was called to *this* office, and to every *other* in the œconomy of our redemption; therefore, though the love of God is manifested in his mediation, yet by
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THAT we are not to suppose the love of God was produced.

Surely, such an advocate, with such a Father, demonstrates that God is very willing they might have the strongest ground of consolation, and a strong degree of comfort, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them : which hope they have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail : whither the fore-runner is for them entered ; even Jesus, made an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec.

But, to enjoy this *strong consolation*, we must be careful lest we indulge a criminal conceit, or vicious curiosity.

If we imagine, that with the gospel in our possession we could plead our own cause effectually, without the assistance of our advocate, we shall certainly find this is a vain imagination. By the commission of some unexpected

expected crime, or the omission of some well-known duty, the glare of our self-consequence will sink into shades, our minds will be confused, and our courage fail. In such a situation, were our advocate to give us up, we should be absolutely confounded. Remark the contrast between Judas and Peter. For the latter, Jesus prayed, and his faith failed not. The former he abandoned: and the awful consequence was, he went to his own place.

If, on the other hand, we indulge an intemperate curiosity on the advocateship of Jesus Christ, by so doing we are sure to debase the subject, and to deprive ourselves of that degree of consolation from it, which they who are sober and sound in the faith, are permitted to enjoy.

To enquire minutely *how* Christ executes the office of an advocate with the Father, whether he pleads in the Hebrew language, or in any other; whether he pleads in this position,

position or that ; whether at stated periods, or as his own wisdom directs, can answer no good end. We know that his intercession on earth was such as became him in this world, and such as was approved of his Father ; and we have reason to believe, that in heaven whatever he doth as our advocate, is so managed as perfectly to correspond with that place which is called the holiest of all.

To be assured that the intercession of Christ is everlasting, and always effectual, is of much greater importance to us than to know what, if it could be known, would not augment our consolation. Let us then be thankful that the scriptures so clearly inform us, that the blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel's, and that Christ hath an unchangeable priesthood, and is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him ; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them :

3. It is further said, that our advocate, who
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is with the Father, is JESUS CHRIST THE
RIGHTEOUS.

Here three titles are attributed to our patron, and each of them deserves our notice.

1. He is called JESUS. This is his proper name: and to them that believe, this name is as ointment poured forth. Well it may, for it signifies JEHOVAH THE SAVIOUR. When he was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, the angel said, Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Important, arduous task! If we consider the rectitude of the divine nature, and the pollution of our own; the inflexibility of the divine justice, and the atrocity of our crimes, we must despair of salvation, unless we confide in Jesus Christ the righteous. But his oblation, and intercession, open, in the valley of Achor, a door of hope: and by him, if *any* man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

2. Our

2. Our advocate is called CHRIST, as well as Jesus. This title reminds us that he is the anointed, and promised MESSIAH. We have found, said Andrew to Peter, the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, *the* CHRIST. Our patron therefore is every way qualified to discharge his office.

Of the Levitical priesthood, it is said, No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. We are likewise informed, So also, CHRIST glorified not himself, to be made an high-priest: but he that said to him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. And, from the same authority, we learn, that when he (the Father) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath *anointed* thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.—Such was the Messiah promised. Such was Jesus Christ when he appeared in
Judea.

Judea. Such is our advocate in heaven, who is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

3. Our advocate is not only called Jesus, and Christ, but Jesus Christ THE RIGHTEOUS; that is the JUST. By the word justice we may understand, that he is true and faithful to his clients; that he is never weary of his office; nor even by an offence like Peter's to be diverted from it. But the principal thing which seems to be intended by this additional title is, that the righteousness of our advocate is that *alone* which he pleads for our perfect discharge from condemnation. Our whole security from wrath and hell, from sin and death, as well as our whole title to heaven, rests upon IT. If that should fail, we must be confounded; but if that is perfect and everlasting, and is the freest gift of the freest grace, they who cordially rely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, may dismiss their fears, and boldly say, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?

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It is Christ that died ; yea rather, that is risen again ; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

As so much depends on the righteousness of Christ, and as nothing else can stand one moment, in the presence of the vindictive justice of God, it becomes us diligently to consider *what* we are to understand by it, *how* it becomes ours ; and by what *means* it may be enjoyed in this world. But though I could wish to discuss each of these questions, having already trespassed a little on *your* patience, I must conclude.

May it please God to increase our faith in that perfect reconciliation which is in Jesus Christ for the relief of sinners, and in the security we have in his patronage before the throne ! May we so grow in grace, and in the knowledge of him, as to plead his cause with good courage before our fellow men, and ever to prefer his kingdom and glory to our earthly interest ! AMEN !

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

HEBREWS ix. 26, 27, 28.

BUT NOW ONCE, IN THE END OF THE WORLD, HATH HE APPEARED TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF: AND AS IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT: SO CHRIST WAS ONCE OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY; AND UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM, SHALL HE APPEAR THE SECOND TIME, WITHOUT SIN UNTO SALVATION.

IT is certain we may acquire some knowledge of God, by considering the works of creation, and some acquaintance with Christ, by looking back to those shadows which were figures of him under the law of Moses.

But these mediums of instruction require more management than we are always inclined to regard. The imperfection of creatures, and of shadows, is generally allowed : but the consequence is not sufficiently considered. Yet, if we are not very attentive to the disparity which always subsists between them and those objects which, in some degree, they represent, the consequence will be, that we must indulge crude and extravagant notions of our Creator and Redeemer. Let us then pass by shadows to substance. Let us, leaving first principles, go on unto perfection. But, while we regard this exhortation, it becomes us to say, And this will we do, if God permit : and to remember, that as our highest attainments are built upon our lowest, so our greatest improvements will not be destructive of the first principles of sound instruction.

The defects of the Jewish dispensation are strongly stated in this epistle. The object which the writer of it had in view, was to convince his countrymen that salvation could
not

not be rationally expected without sacrifice, nor by any other sacrifice than that of Jesus Christ.

In the compass of a few verses, he proves the sufficiency of Christ's oblation, though but once offered, by no less than *six* arguments. He argues to this effect: Because, if it was not sufficient, then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. Because, it was of divine appointment that Christ should die but once. Because, though the law can never, with those sacrifices which were offered under it, year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect, yet Christ, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. Because, he sits there expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool. Because, by his one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Because, of the nature of the new covenant, which includes and secures the full remission of sins: for where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin*.

* Vid. Van Hoeke in Loc.

From this view of the context, it appears, that the *sufficiency* of the one, the single offering of Jesus Christ, was the capital thing which the sacred writer here had in view.

In the text itself, we may observe, that he introduces a contrast and comparison suited to his serious purpose, and that to these he has subjoined a declaration of great importance to the household of faith.

Each part of my text, in the order which has been mentioned, I propose to consider : though the last part of it, I own, best agrees with the design of this discourse.

I. The CONTRAST now before us, lies in these words : *But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.* This contrast is so formed from the preceding words, as to manifest a pleasing disparity between the high priests under the law, and the great High Priest of our profession. There is, if I may so express it, a triple contrast in our text. The first

first has respect to the time of Christ's oblation; the second, to its effect; and the third, to the nature of his sacrifice.

First; as to the TIME of Christ's oblation we may observe, that if it had been offered often, it would not have been deferred to the end of the world. But as the wisdom of God determines every thing that is excellent, to be done in its proper season, so undoubtedly, among the rest, it determined when it was most proper the vicarious sacrifice of Christ should be presented.

It is plain, the Apostle speaks of the *end* of the world, in our text, in opposition to the *foundation* of the world, in the former part of this verse: and that the word *once*, is here opposed to the word *often*, in the preceding clause.

But some may be disposed to ask, What does the author of this epistle mean by the *end* of the world? and, Why was the sacrifice of Christ so long *deferred*?

To the *first* of these questions, I answer, that the words which we translate *the end of the world*, hath been more literally translated *the consummation of ages*. This world hath often been divided into THREE AGES. According to this division, the first age was that which preceded the law of Moses. The second age was that which was under the law. The third age is the age which followed, the Christian age, which is the consummation of the preceding ages, and will not give way to any other. In this last age, the kindom of heaven is opened to *all* believers: and when it is finished, then cometh the end of every thing on earth, that God may be ALL IN ALL.

To the *second* question, Why was the sacrifice of Christ so long *deferred*? I answer, it becomes us to suppose, there were more and greater reasons for this seeming delay than we are able to comprehend. I add, it is sufficient for us to know it was the will of God the patriarchal age should take the lead, that the Mosaic dispensation should follow, that
the

the Christian age should succeed it, and be the consummation of the former two ; that Christ should not appear in the form of a servant, and as the Saviour of sinners, till predictions and promises, shadows and figures, had raised the desire and hope of his Incarnation ; and till the nations of the world had ample reason to conclude, there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

From this view of the *sufficiency* of Christ's oblation, though but ONCE offered, we may infer its excellence. Whatever is most excellent is single. In nature there is but one sun. In a distinct kingdom there is but one king. In the universe there is but one God. In the church there is but one Redeemer.

Secondly ; the *effect* of the sacrifice of Christ, is here opposed to the weakness of those sacrifices which were under the law ; for, by his sacrifice, Christ hath put away sin ; but in those sacrifices, there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

By

By *sin* is here intended its whole empire and dominion, as it invaded our nature in its power, oppressed our persons with its guilt, and filled the whole world with its fruits. But Christ appeared to abolish sin, and to be its destruction; to take away its horrid force, or what is sometimes called the law of sin*.

In the *law* of sin there are two powers; that which obliges the sinner unto punishment, and that compelling power which leads him captive into all iniquity and disobedience. Christ appeared to abrogate this law of sin, and to deprive it gradually, of its whole strength: first, by making an atonement for our iniquities; next, by purging our consciences from dead works, and finally, by bringing us through his grace to eternal glory.

Thus the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made believers free from the law of sin and death; and thus it appears, that

* See DOCTOR OWEN on the text, in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

what

what the law of Moses could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin condemned sin in the flesh of Christ, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

Thirdly; the Apostle contrasts the *nature* of Christ's sacrifice with the nature of those sacrifices which were offered under the law. Aaron and his sons offered, in sacrifice, the blood of others. Christ his own blood. The sacrifices under the law, at best, were brutal sacrifices; but our Lord's sacrifice was the sacrifice of HIMSELF.

On this argument, the writer of this Epistle frequently insists. When speaking of our great High Priest as holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; he adds, Who needeth not daily, as those high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once when he offered up HIMSELF: and in our
context

context he reasons thus : If, saith he, the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the *flesh* ; how much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself to God, purge your *consciences* from dead works to serve the living God ?—In short, from his arguments, nothing can be clearer than this, that Christ by HIMSELF, purged our sins before he sat down, in our nature, at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

II. Let us now pass from the contrast which has been considered, to that comparison that is connected with it. Thus it is introduced : *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment : so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.*

In these words the death of Christ, and the condition of our Lord's body after his death, is compared with the death of men in common, and with the common condition of their bodies, between death and judgment. The comparison therefore is double : the first
part

part of it hath respect to the *necessity* of death, and the second to the well-known *condition* of the dead till the general judgment.

When the Apostle said, It is appointed unto men *once* to die, though it is an assertion liable to some exceptions, yet those exceptions, whether under the Old Testament, or under the New, do not affect the Apostle's argument. He speaks of the *general* state of mankind; that men *must* die; die but once, and once die, in consequence of the divine appointment. Death, therefore, is to us *inevitable*.

But we are not to suppose that the death of Christ was in consequence of this *general* appointment. No, his death was by a *particular* ordinance and appointment of the Father, according to which he became the surety of sinners. For, it is evident, that Jesus Christ being exempt from all sin, as well in his birth, as in his life, he could not be subject to death by that appointment which brings us into the regions of the dead. Besides,

sides, as his human nature was personally united to that WORD which was made flesh, that is to say, to the source of life, it was not possible he should have died without his own consent. Had not his death been voluntary, it could not have been vicarious. From his transfiguration, it is manifest, had not a previous compact made him willing to die for the sins of his people, mortality might have been swallowed up of life. But, by becoming our surety, the death of Christ, by a particular appointment, became as necessary, as by the general appointment, on account of sin, it was necessary that judgment should come upon all men to condemnation.

The common *condition* of the dead till the day of judgment is such, that as the body falls to the dust, there it must lie, till the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. When a man dies he hath done with this world. In it he no longer lives, acts, or suffers. The argument of the Apostle is to this effect, That as between death and judgment men are not on earth,

earth, and have no function there to perform, so Christ from his death, or rather from his ascension into heaven, is no longer on earth, in respect of his corporal presence, and therefore, cannot offer himself a *second* time.

Christ indeed, shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs; being seen of them that believed in him, forty days, and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But when the cloud received him out of their sight, his body became *immortal*; it ascended into heaven, and must there remain, till the times of the restitution of all things.

Of this corporal absence, our Lord spake frequently, in strong terms, previous to his departure. I leave, said he, the world, and go to the Father. Again, just before his crucifixion, he was heard to say, I am no more in the world. At another time he said, If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. If any man shall
say,

say, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so also shall the coming of the son of man be.

The manner in which our Lord appeared unto Stephen in the council, and to Saul when he journied towards Damascus, by no means contradicts the preceding quotations. The word of the Lord is stedfast; and we may depend upon it, that when Christ appears the second time, it will be from heaven, and in the manner declared in the following words of my text.

III. Of that DECLARATION which is so important to the household of faith, I am now to take some notice. It is the closing part of the comparison which has engaged our attention, and is thus represented: *Unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.*

At

At his first coming, Christ took on him the sins of his people, and bare them, as Peter expresses it, in his own body on the tree. But at his second coming, he will appear *without sin* : because, as we have seen, it was abolished by his death. Had the least sin remained which he had not put away, by the sacrifice of himself, he could not, as our surety, have been released from his tomb, much less could he have passed into the heavens, in, or with our nature, to plead the virtue of his own blood. But having magnified the law, and made it honourable, he received a full discharge at his resurrection, and, at his ascension, went up into heaven with a shout : the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

We are now then, to regard him who speaketh from heaven : and should endeavour to live looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. For to them that look for him, will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Of the particular *time* of the second coming of Christ, whether it will be in this century, in the following, or in the next after that, I know nothing. But, as his first coming included the whole of that period which commenced at his incarnation, and was not closed till his crucifixion, so I believe his second coming involves in it, every display of his power, and every operation of his providence, from his ascension into heaven to the general judgment.

In this long period, Christ is continually coming in the course of providential events, and by the ministry of his word. But *when* the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel—*when* he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be honored in all them that believe, of this, it is my duty to say, I have no knowledge.

The *manner* of his appearance, whenever it shall happen, will be *without sin*. But as
Christ

Christ ever was without sin in himself, the meaning must be, that at his second coming, he will appear without the likeness of sinful flesh, and without any the least need of offering a second oblation for the sins of his people. For, he will then come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of his holy angels.

The *end* of this promised, and glorious appearance, is the salvation of them that look for him. If the word salvation relates immediately to his appearance, the meaning is to bestow on them that look for him *eternal* salvation. If to *look* for his appearance, is most emphatical in this clause, this expresses the qualification of those who expect it, by the object of their faith, and by the manner in which their faith is exercised in this world. But where both senses are equally true, we need not limit the signification of the words to either*.

* Doctor Owen, in Loc.

Having thus attended to the contrast and comparison in our text, and to that declaration in it which completes the latter, and which hath led us to reflect on the second coming of Christ, I will now subjoin a few additional remarks.

1. When the Apostle speaks of the end of the world, or of the *consummation of ages*, as if the preceding earthly, and carnal system, were done away by Christ, to give place to a state of things celestial and everlasting, is it not to teach us the propriety of setting our affections on things above, not on things on the earth; and of putting on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, barbarian, bond, nor free; but where Christ is all in all?

2. If Christ appeared to *put away sin*, we must suppose that he abhors it. Why else did he take it away? Why else doth he seek
its

its destruction? Why else it is said, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity? Are we thoroughly convinced of this fact? Doth it meet with our approbation? Do we know that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin? If we know this, and reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; if we let not sin reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof, if we yield not our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, we may be satisfied sin shall not have dominion over us; and conclude we are not under the law, but under grace.

3. As Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of HIMSELF, the grandeur of his sacrifice, which is not typical, but real, which is not defective, but complete, should engage us constantly, to mortify by it, our members which are yet upon the earth; lest

we despise the proper effect of his oblation, or at least, incapacitate ourselves for glorying in the cross of Christ. If the sacrifices of beasts under the law, obliged the comers thereunto to renounce sin, might not the obedient Israelites rise up in judgment against us, should we treat with contempt, (which God forbid!) the sacrifice of his own Son? But if by it, we do not *exercise* ourselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men, it is impossible to say into what errors we may not fall, what follies we may not commit, or what degree of reproach we may not bring on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

4. As it is *appointed* unto men once to die, let us look upon our own death as inevitable, and, from the divine appointment, regard it as a very solemn event. If you consider death to be nothing more than the *mere* effect of second causes, it is a mistake. The scriptures inform us, the wages of sin is death: and they assure us, that if we believe not in Christ, we must die in our sins.

These

These are very serious declarations to men who have the seeds of death within themselves, and who are already under its *arrest*. What else can we call our gradual decay, and those increasing complaints which daily remind us of our approaching dissolution? Are we properly affected with these things? Are we disposed to say, Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom? In the gayer moments of life, whether in society, or in some flippant temper at home, such questions may be unwelcome; but when we sedately consider the transitory nature of our present state, and that the future is not to be expected as another state of probation, they will not seem to be impertinent, nor will they be thought illiberal.

5. If after death is *the judgment*, let us frequently meditate on this awful, glorious, and final scene. It is a judgment in which the books of God will be opened. A judgment in which our own conscience, as another book, shall set before us a thousand

things which we have now forgotten. A judgment in which Christ will appear in his glory. A judgment in which all men will be confounded who are not interested in his grace. What manner of persons then, ought we to be, (as much as lieth in us,) in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat!

But you will say, who can possibly live without sin? I answer, no man. But I add, there are sins of infirmity, and sins of rebellion, and malice against God; there are sins which reign uncontrouled, and of which some men are disposed to glory; and sins which we confess, blushing at our follies, and which we attempt to mortify and subdue. The spots of the latter are the spots of the upright; (for there is not even now, a just man upon earth who doth good, and sinneth not;) but if our spots are not the spots of his children, how shall we stand before him who is Judge of all!

Christians,

Christians, however, have nothing to fear, but much to expect, from the second coming of Christ. They live looking for him, and unto them that *look* for him, shall he appear, without sin, unto salvation.—It is true, when he cometh, *every* eye shall see him, and *all* kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; yet they only who *look* for him will rejoice at his approach.

The promised and expected appearance of our Lord, supposes, as has been stated to you before, that at present, he is to us *invisible*, and will be so to the inhabitants of this world, till the general judgment. This fact is a great exercise to our faith: but as faith flourishes, we shall live in stedfast and ardent hope, that he will *appear* to our joy, and believe that they who have said, *Where* is the promise of his coming? shall then be ashamed?

6. To conclude: If Isaiah said to the ancient Jews, Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon

upon thee ; if under all their calamities, the approaching advent of the Messiah was their greatest consolation ; if the truly pious among them were ever saying, O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion ! in belief that when the Lord brought back the captivity of his people, Jacob would rejoice, and Israel would be glad ; if Simeon, when the promised Messiah appeared, (taking up in his aged arms, the child Jesus,) said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ! how much more should they rejoice, who properly expect, and patiently wait, for the *second* coming of Christ !

At his first coming, he appeared indeed, to announce glad tidings, to public salvation, and to promise eternal life. But, at his second coming, we are told, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. neither shall there be any more pain. At his first coming, our Lord left, his church on earth, subject to innumerable temptations ; but at the close of his second coming, he
himself

himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then those which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together, with them who are raised from the dead, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall they ever be with the Lord!—May we have grace to comfort one another with these words! and to say, Even so come, Lord JESUS*. AMEN!

* See a Sermon on the words of our text, by JEAN MESTREZAT.

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST THE SUM OF THE SACRED
SCRIPTURES,

JOHN V. 39.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES; FOR IN THEM YE THINK
YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE; AND THEY ARE THEY
THAT TESTIFY OF ME.

I NOW stand up among you to preach the last of these Lectures. The first of them, may be considered as a kind of introduction to the following *fifteen*, and this, as concluding with an inference from what I have ventured to advance on the character of Christ. For I now infer, and I think my present text warrants the inference, that CHRIST IS THE SUM OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

The

The scriptures which our Lord exhorted the Jews to search, were undoubtedly, those scriptures which they allowed to be canonical, and which they considered as divine.

These scriptures have been thus divided :

I. The *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses : the names of them, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

II. The *anterior* prophets : the names of these books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.

III. The *posterior* prophets : the names of these books, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

IV. The *Hagiographa* : which contains the books of the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, the Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

According

According to this division, if we reckon Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, each of them as containing two books, the whole number of the books in the Old Testament is, *thirty-nine*. For there are *five* books in the *Pentateuch*, *six* in the *former* prophets, *fifteen* in the *latter* prophets, and *thirteen* in the *Hagiographa*.

But that division which our Lord himself made of the Old Testament, is more simple. All things, said he, to his disciples, must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Where, by the law of Moses, the whole *Pentateuch* is intended; by the prophets, the former and the latter; and by the Psalms, all the books of the *Hagiographa*.

The text I have read contains an exhortation, an argument to regard it, and an application of the argument; from which, it will, I hope, appear, that Christ is the sum of the sacred scriptures.

I. The

1. The EXHORTATION is this, *Search the scriptures.*

This exhortation permits us to suppose, that the Jews to whom our Lord spake, were superficial readers of those books which they allowed to be divine : and the fact was, that they notoriously preferred perverse comments of *modern* date, and idle tales, then recently reported, to the great things contained in their sacred writings.

When our Lord said to these Jews, *Search the scriptures*, the word which we have translated *search*, seems to be so emphatical, and to injoin such diligence and care in scrutinizing into the scriptures, in order to their forming just notions of the promised Messiah, that we cannot imagine it was their usual practice. This not only seems to justify our translation of this part of our text, in the imperative mood, but to teach us, that Christ was better satisfied with the integrity of the Hebrew scriptures than many learned men now are in this country. He did not say to the

the Jews, *Correct the scriptures*; but *search them*; that is, investigate their meaning.

To be sure, many centuries are elapsed since our Lord thus addressed the litigious Jews: and, as those copies of the Hebrew bible which are now in the world, are none of them, as I suppose, the autographs of the inspired penmen, it is probable, that the most correct copies of it now existing, are stained with some mistakes. Truth, however, on this subject, is to be sought for, by keeping a just medium between superstition and extravagance.

A superstitious regard for the text of the Old Testament, has long since been treated with contempt; but the contemptuous have, I fear, indulged an extravagance as idle, as that false devotion over which they loudly boast of being victorious. If you will believe some of our learned men, a few thousand pounds must yet be spent, and a few years at least must yet be given to laborious travail abroad, before we can hope to see a
correct

correct copy of the sacred text. *Then* indeed—but, I am by no means convinced, we shall *then* be much better accommodated than *now*.

One of the most learned, and diligent of our modern *correctors* of the sacred text, has said THAT, however, on this subject, which you will be pleased to hear. His words are these: “Notwithstanding all the various corruptions of whatever sort, that now disfigure the Hebrew scriptures; it is as certain, as any position of this kind can possibly be, that they are still essentially the same; and that the whole historical tenor of the divine œconomy towards man has been preserved in them, without any important alteration, to the present time. Take, adds the learned Doctor, the most modern and most imperfect transcript of their originals, that now exists; or even the most erroneous copy of the most erroneous version, that ever was made from them; and you shall find in it every thing that is absolutely necessary to constitute an authentic writing; and to answer all

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the great purposes for which they were intended ?

I shall draw no such ridiculous conclusion from this pleasing concession, as that of which this learned writer complains, namely, that it is therefore, unnecessary to correct at all ; but, I shall venture to infer, that if some of the most *modern* transcripts of the Hebrew scriptures are, probably, the most imperfect, should the present rage for correction, and for liberal translations somewhat subside, the *great* purposes which the sacred writings were intended to answer, would be as conspicuous as could be wished, and perhaps more regarded, than they will be when various readings are swelled to the most enormous size.

II. The ARGUMENT by which our Lord enforced his exhortation, was an argument properly applied to the Jews. *In them*, said he, *ye think ye have eternal life*. On this principle therefore, they must admit the propriety of his address to them, as they could not prove
they

they had sufficiently regarded either the law, or the prophets.

Some have concluded from this address, that the *Jews* to whom our Lord spake, entertained an opinion, that they *merited* eternal life by their sedulous, but superficial attention to the scriptures. This is possible: as most of them were infatuated with self-righteous singularities. But it seems more probable, that when Christ argued with them in this manner, that he stated it as their common opinion, that the doctrine and promise of *eternal life*, were contained in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms.

The famous question which was put to Him, Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life, at once shews their common belief of a future state, and the manner in which they perverted the scriptures by their unwise constructions. To teach them better, Christ did in effect inform them, that if they searched the scriptures, they would find, that as eternal life was re-

vealed therein, so the promise of it, was every where closely connected with his mediation, and was to be received as an unmerited gift, and not to be obtained by the good works of sinful men.

Our Lord was pleased to add, for their further conviction, these words, *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* From this rebuke we may infer, that the Jews did not sin through ignorance, or for want of proper information, but in a manner that was obstinately outrageous. They professed to believe in a future state. The ground of their belief was the scriptures. Those very scriptures testified of Christ. To him gave all their prophets witness. Yet, said our Lord unto them, *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* This seems strange: and the more so since he also said, *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*

How are we to account for such strange
behaviour?

behaviour? Were we utterly unable, the fact would merit our attention; and to use our best efforts to avoid a judaizing temper, would be our constant duty. But he who hath felt the force of a self-righteous disposition, and imbibed a strong passion for the pride of life, may more than guess at the leading error of the Jews. If *another* came in his own name, he came to aggrandize himself: but then, coming without authority, he was obliged to divide the spoil among his followers; so that they who adhered to his interest had whereof to glory. This our Lord, who came in his Father's name, would not permit: and how difficult it is to receive that Messiah, whose grace excludeth boasting, and whose kingdom is not of this world, all that are brought to obey the gospel of Christ are compelled to confess.

From the manner in which our Lord enforced his exhortation, it appears that we are allowed to argue with men upon their own principles, and that the worst of men some-

times hold, even while they pervert them, principles of real importance.

The argument of Christ would have been of no force, if the Old Testament had not contained the doctrine and promise of eternal life. But we are sure it did. For the scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee, shall all nations be blessed. Yes, and unto the sons of Abraham also, was the gospel preached, as well as unto us, though the word preached did not profit all of his posterity, not being mixed with faith in many of them that heard it.

Here I am obliged to quit the learned bishop whom I have more than once mentioned with respect. The concluding position in his most capital performance is this : That a doctrine of future rewards and punishments, is not to be found in, nor did it make a part of, the Mosaic dispensation. On the contrary, I believe, not only that the gospel of Christ
was

was published to Adam, on that very day on which he sinned and came short of the glory of God ; not only that the patriarchs before and after the flood, were acquainted with it, and relieved by it, but that under the Mosaic dispensation, the joyful sound of the gospel did not cease to be heard, and that in every age, in proportion as it was heard, the blessing of eternal life was believed and enjoyed.

The translation of ENOCH, (who, by the way, prophesied of Christ, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints,) this translation gave to the antediluvian patriarchs, an assurance of a blissful immortality ; which, all of them that walked with God, and confided in the covenant of his grace, expected.

The scenical exhibition of the day of Christ, made to ABRAHAM, when he offered up his only-begotten Son, ill agrees with mere temporal promises to the whole of his posterity. No doubt the covenant of grace under

times hold, even while they pervert them, principles of real importance.

The argument of Christ would have been of no force, if the Old Testament had not contained the doctrine and promise of eternal life. But we are sure it did. For the scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee, shall all nations be blessed. Yes, and unto the sons of Abraham also, was the gospel preached, as well as unto us, though the word preached did not profit all of his posterity, not being mixed with faith in many of them that heard it.

Here I am obliged to quit the learned bishop whom I have more than once mentioned with respect. The concluding position in his most capital performance is this : That a doctrine of future rewards and punishments, is not to be found in, nor did it make a part of, the Mosaic dispensation. On the contrary, I believe, not only that the gospel of Christ
was

was published to Adam, on that very day on which he sinned and came short of the glory of God; not only that the patriarchs before and after the flood, were acquainted with it, and relieved by it, but that under the Mo-
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the Mosaic, intervening state of things, was somewhat obscured ; but that it still existed, and was by many enjoyed, a long list of able advocates have sufficiently shewn.

The words of Paul are, in my opinion, unanswerable. He argues thus : Brethren, I speak after the manner of men ; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

In short, if we may so express it, God would be ashamed to be called their God, unto whom he had not exhibited a better country, that is an heavenly, and for whom he had not prepared a celestial city.

III. The

III. The APPLICATION of our Lord's argument to the Jews to search the scriptures, is thus expressed : *They are they which testify of me.*

From these words we may infer, that Christ cannot be known by us without the medium of testimony ; that the testimony of the scriptures cannot be contradicted ; and, that he Himself, is the sum of them.

I. Christ cannot be known by us without the medium of TESTIMONY.

When he was in the world, the world knew him not. Had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. He came to his own nation, and his own nation, collectively considered, knew him not. But as many as received him, whether of his own nation, or of any other, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. But, they who believed to salvation, received that report which the prophets had given of him, as it was explained and confirmed by
our

our Lord himself. It follows, that they who saw the Messiah, would not have seen him to any saving purpose, unless they had *believed*. When a certain woman lifted up her voice and said to Him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked; he replied, Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

As to those persons who lived before the Incarnation, and those who have lived since the Crucifixion, unless the former had believed the prophets, and the latter the apostles, it is certain that neither they, nor we, could have been properly acquainted with the character of Christ.

The supposition of an extraordinary and immediate revelation, were it granted, would not affect my argument. For they who talk of this favour must believe what is supposed to be revealed to them, or be no wiser for the indulgence; and if that revelation be from above, we may be confident it will perfectly correspond

correspond with the word of truth already in our possession. For,

2. The testimony of the scriptures cannot be *contradicted*.

If we read in the inspired volumes of some things which are spoken of, not in all the possible rigour of speech, but as they appear to us, this is no more than what we frequently meet with in many books professedly written on philosophical subjects : those things therefore, must be taken as they were intended ; and with such caution, (which is due to every writer,) it will be found the scriptures are invincible.

As to those unseen things which are peculiar to revelation, it is impossible that the reason of man should refute this original report. For, what can we reason from, but from what we know ? and what can we know of these invisible things, without the word of God ? From that indeed we may reason, with more or less of precision ; but if we make it the *root*
of

of our reasoning, we must believe it to be what it is, before we can reason from it to any beneficial purpose.

The authenticity, or genuine authority of the scriptures, is an article of very great moment. Every thing pertaining to revealed religion rests upon it. Yet, as you have perceived, in these lectures, it is generally taken for granted. Because, this was not the subject which I proposed to discuss. Because, I had no reason to conclude you were unsettled in this article of your faith. Because, I only take that for granted which hath been already so proved by many, as to satisfy every reasonable, and upright mind.

For my own part, I am not only fully convinced of the genuine authority of the scriptures, but I daily perceive, that their *fulnes* is much greater than Christians, in general, are willing to admit. Their authority is not only firmly settled, but supreme. Convinced of this, I conclude that a sound interpretation of the sacred writings, taken in
their

their proper connection, and practically regarded, at all events, will make us invincible; and give us more understanding, fortitude, and peace, than is possible to be enjoyed, without such just reverence for the word of God.

3. It only remains to shew, that CHRIST is the SUM of the sacred scriptures.

It must be owned, from this fact, some have fancied that they have found Christ in certain places of the word of God, where others have not been able to discern him. This allegorizing humour has been too much indulged. Yet, I am persuaded, that an attention, professedly confined to the *literal* sense of the scriptures, ill agrees with that *search* of them which our Lord hath recommended. Nothing more absurd, or more pernicious, was ever communicated from the pulpit, or from the press, than under such professions. Transubstantiation itself, rests on a pretended regard to such impoverished interpretation. The errors of pi-
ous

ous men, who cannot be so confined, may produce a smile, or, in some instances, they may extort a sigh : but the other extreme is much more alarming.

I am not ashamed to own, I would rather read *Cocceius* than *Grotius*, and the expository notes of Mr. Hervey, than the deliberate, but dull commentaries of Mr. Locke.

If a man is well acquainted with Jesus Christ, and hath an ardent love for his person, government, and grace, though he may misapply particular passages of scripture, yet, that man will rarely err against the general tenor, and grand design of the sacred writings. But if any commentator, or preacher, is fond of his own reputation in this world ; if he shudders at the thought of following the outline of any system of religion, or of allowing there are any mysteries in Christianity ; if he thinks that whatever is beyond the literal sense of scripture must be absurd ; if he endeavours to make the sacred text a vehicle to convey his latitudinarian sentiments,
and

and is strongly inclined to meet half way, those Socinians, Deists, and Free-thinkers, who have more interest, and influence in this world, than some better characters, who are, by the wisdom of God, thrown into the shades of life; was he the most learned man in Europe, his labours would be of little value, and his example, were we able to follow it, would be unworthy of our imitation.

After these remarks, it may be expected, I should take some notice of what is said of Christ in the LAW, the PROPHETS, and the PSALMS. But this is an expectation, if it exists, that I cannot greatly gratify in this discourse. I will however say, what is, in my own opinion, sufficient to shew, that *Christ is the sum of the sacred scriptures.*

In the LAW, or five books of Moses, we read of THAT seed of the woman which was to bruise the serpent's head; of those sacrifices which were acceptable to God, not on their own account, but on his account alone, who is the Lamb slain from the foundation of
of

of the world; of altars that prefigured his person; of incense, that shadowed forth his intercession; of acts that were founded on his mediation; of a ritual that was a wall of partition between his peculiar people, and the surrounding nations of the world; of a prophet like unto Moses, of a priest like unto Melchizedec, and of a king who was to reign for ever. In these venerable books we behold all the great men of the remotest antiquity, such as Adam, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, living by faith on Jesus Christ, and dying as they lived. The fair inference is, CHRIST IS THE SUM OF THE LAW.

As to the prophets we have seen*, that to HIM give all the prophets witness: and surely, what they have witnessed of Christ is of the greatest importance to us; for they bear witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins. In this belief, and by that faith

* See Sermon I.

which

which, in many other respects, God approved, they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of the fire, escaped the edge of the sword ; out of weakness were made strong ; waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens : these all having obtained a good report through that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, make it manifest, that the law and the prophets lead us to the same object, and that *Christ is the sum of BOTH.*

In the **PSALMS**, and in other parts of the *Hagiographa*, we see the faith and the patience of the saints, whether they lived before the law, or under it, to a considerable advantage. For, in those books, we have larger specimens of their devotion preserved than in any other. But who was the source and soul of that ardent, sublime, and sound devotion which is there recorded for our comfort and our imitation? **JESUS CHRIST**. In proof of this,

this, let me read you a few passages from these holy writings :

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer : my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised ; so shall I be saved from mine enemies.—As for God, his way is perfect ; the word of the Lord is tried : he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. For who is God save the Lord ? or who is a rock save our God ?—From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed : lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever : I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

Such was the devotion of David ; which needs no comment to inform us who was become

come his strength, and song, and salvation. Such devotion, whether in the Psalms, or in any other part of the *Hagiographa*, should be to us the more acceptable, since we are told, That whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. These words, in my opinion, shew us there is a close connection between the Old Testament and the New ; so that if Christ is the sum of the one, he must be so of the other. He said to the Jews, Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me : But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ?

Nobody denies, that many things once somewhat obscured by the Abrahamic covenant, and by the Mosaic dispensation, are brought into greater light, and into more immediate use, by the present *simplicity* of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But, if we have any thing in the New Testament, which was neither the subject of prophecy, nor of promise

mise in the Old ; if we have any thing in it, which sets aside the use of *analogy*, or which has abolished all that is mysterious in our salvation, I must, for myself, declare, however degrading the declaration may be, it has hitherto escaped my notice.

But, though I think, it must be allowed, that CHRIST IS THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, yet this does not imply any thing, in the least, that is partial to his praise ; or that has any tendency to degrade the FATHER, or the nature, or office, of the HOLY SPIRIT. For, whatever Christ is unto us, as our MEDIATOR, he is ALL THAT of God the FATHER ; and whatever we know and enjoy of his MEDIATION, is, most undoubtedly, through the words, the grace and energy of the HOLY GHOST.

At the close of these lectures, allow me to say my wish is, that none of us may ever be fools, and slow of heart to believe, all, or any thing, which the prophets have said of
Jesus

Jesus Christ. Yet, how can we believe, if we receive honour one of another, and seek not that honour that cometh of God only? May we, however, be guarded against *misbelief*, as well as against *unbelief*! May we imitate those noble *Bereans*, who not only received the Word with all readiness of mind, but who *searched* the scriptures daily, to see whether those things were so! May we imitate, as we can, and so far as our station will admit, those holy prophets, who inquired, and searched diligently, in order to investigate the meaning of their own prophecies, which were prophecies of that grace which should come unto us! May we search, as they searched, what manner of time, the spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when *IT* testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow!

Thus employed, we may still hope for that assistance which will make our heart burn within us, as the scriptures are opened

to our understanding : and, thus employed, and assisted, we shall, I trust, with the heart, believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth, make confession unto salvation.

Thus I close these lectures : on which may it please God to command his blessing.—
AMEN !

ERRATA

ERRATA AND NOTES.

PAGE 4, line 5, for *may expect*, read *will find*.

P. 5. l. 3. *Nor can he, in any of them, rise above analogy.*] The true nature, and real importance of analogy, as applied to religious subjects, is ably stated, and well defended, by PETER BROWNE, B. D. Senior Fellow of *Trin. Coll.* DUBLIN; in an answer to a book called *Christianity not mysterious*. The *third* edition of this useful little book was published 1703.

P. 20, l. 2. *Typical institutions—may be considered as involving so many predictions of the approaching advent and kingdom of Jesus Christ.*] The legal ceremonies led (the Jews) to Jesus Christ, by way of figure and sign, as by a crayon, or rough, imperfect draught. All

these things were shadows of good things to come; but the body is of Christ. Under the law, all was shadow and figure; under the gospel, all is verity. We have the true Israel, the true deliverance, the true manna, the true tabernacle, the true righteousness, the true expiation of sin, the true spiritual and reasonable service, and that worship which is in spirit and in truth.

SUPERVILLE,

P. 25, l. 20. *Of how much labour and sorrow then, are they eased who lived by faith.*]

Our reason is prepossessed with so many different forms of illusion which abuse it, and embarrassed with so many difficulties which astonishes its possessor, and falls so often into uncertainty and irresolution, which disconcerts it, that it is absolutely incapable to direct us safely.

CALVIN,

P. 31, line 22, for *Tiberius*, read *Augustus*,

P. 34, line 9, dele *his*.

P. 51, l. 24, after the word *made*, add *us*.

P. 52,

P. 52, make the next page 53.

P. 54, l. 11. *Yet, that faith which accompanies salvation, must be attributed to grace.*] Salutory knowledge is the effect of grace alone. Even a simple, historical, and speculative knowledge, proceeds from the special favour of God.—There is nothing more common with them who dispute against true religion, than these words: “ Prove what you assert, and I will believe it.” But these persons speak as if faith only depended on themselves. They promise that which is not in their power. It is as if a blind man should promise to acknowledge the existence of colours, provided we shew *him* they exist. Whatever evidence truth carries in itself, that evidence is only perceptible to him who hath eyes to discern it. But this faculty is not given to all, though all men presume they have it.

JEAN DESPAGNE.

P. 60, l. 9. *What is only open to belief.*] In the gospel, all religion is marked out by
faith;

faith; and all our duties by believing in Jesus Christ: because faith is the first act, the act most universal, and essential to Christianity; and because all the virtues arise from it.

SUPERVILLE.

P. 63, l. 17. *A miracle may be the subject of our belief, before we have any sensible evidence of the fact.*] But in this instance, of the Incarnation, a sensible evidence followed the Virgin's belief; and should follow in the *pretended* miracle of *transubstantiation*, if the abettors of that strange doctrine expect that protestants, should ever hear them, on that outrageous subject, with any patience.

P. 65, l. 11. *We know of no miracle that more abundantly displays the power of God than creation.*] This, upon second thoughts, may perhaps, be disputed.

P. 69, l. 10, for *forty*, read *seventy*.

P. 72, l. 2, for *and*, read *for*: and after *it*, add *was*.

P. 89,

P. 89, l. 18. *When the word of God was made flesh, it was in a manner which produced no confusion between the divine nature and that which he assumed.*] In Jesus Christ, God is united to man, and man united to God : but God is not changed into man, nor hath man been transformed into God. God hath always been God, with all those attributes which are divine ; man hath always been man, with all those qualities which are human. Therefore, we remark in our Saviour all the weakness of humanity ; hunger, thirst, lassitude, sleep, pains, and wounds. Why then, should he not have been subject to sorrow, fear, and terrors, as well as to other accidents of our flesh ? Further ; he had proof, in his own mind, of all the passions of human nature. For, we see him in anger, when he overturned the tables of the money-changers in the temple, and made a scourge of small cords, and drove the prophane merchants out of it ; we see him touched with sorrow and pain, when he groaned, and was troubled, at the tomb of Lazarus, and when he wept over Jerusalem ;

Jerusalem; we find him rejoicing in spirit, when he said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight; and, we perceive his amity and tenderness when he honoured St. John with so much of his friendship, as, on that account, John was called, *that disciple whom Jesus loved.*

Du Bosc.

P. 98, l. 10. *Our Lord was brought up under those outward repulses which were not easy to be surmounted.*] Jesus Christ, very far from being treated delicately in this world, was so much disturbed, during the days of his flesh, that we may say, not only that he was in continual afflictions, but that his whole life was a perpetual cross. The Apostle gives us the reason of this, by saying, Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

CALVIN,

P. 121,

P. 121, l. 12, after *but*, add *much more depends upon it*.

P. 124, l. 22, after *or*, add *where they*.

P. 160, l. 14. *What consolations they may derive from his temptations and from his ability to succour them that are tempted, is a pleasing consideration.]* Jesus permitted the tempter to approach him, to make us see the truth of his human nature, and that he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He permitted it, to assure us, that, as our great high priest, he would succour those that are tempted, having been tempted himself, and to make us comprehend he was truly the son of THAT woman who was to bruise the serpent's head. He permitted it, to shew the difference between the first and the second Adam. The first Adam had fallen, even in paradise, where he had all he could innocently desire; but the second, in a desert, triumphed over the same tempter that vanquished our first progenitor. The first temptation was the commencement of ruin to the human race; the second, may be considered

considered as the commencement of our deliverance.

PICTET.

P. 164, l. 5, for *confided*, read *confined*; and, in l. 20, for *of*, read *in*.

P. 168, l. 3. *Certainly nothing miraculous has taken place.*] That a miracle has been the subject of belief, before the believer had a sensible evidence of the fact, was asserted in a former lecture; (see p. 63.) nor is that assertion contradicted in p. 168. For, though the miracle of the Incarnation was wrought before Mary had any sensible evidence of the fact, it was on that kind of testimony she could not resist, and followed, in due time, with all the evidence of sense.

P. 170, l. 4. *If it is allowed there is something really supernatural in regeneration, sanctification, and the perseverance of the saints, the scripture account of our effectual calling will be religiously revered, but, &c.*] We must attribute to grace, not only a part of our vocation,

tion, and sanctification, but we must ascribe to it every thing, without reserve ; both the commencement and progress, the continuation and the end, the habit and the act, the sufficiency and the efficacy, equally appertain to grace. If we enter into the course of salvation, it is of grace ; if we walk on in that course, it is grace that moves us to proceed ; if we run in it, it is grace which advanceth our pace ; if we persevere, it is grace which supports us ; if we attain the end (of our high calling) it is grace that brings us thither. So that, from the first step to the last, it is grace that conducts us, and brings us to good. For, we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God. If then, we think, say, or do, any thing which is commendable, it must necessarily follow, this is not of ourselves, but is by the assistance, and operation of grace.

Du Bosc.

In such an order of things there is usually a common principle which supplies all the rest.

All

All the waters come from the ocean. All light comes from the sun. All natural life, in men, comes from Adam. Likewise in grace, there is one and the same source from whence proceeds all we have of light, of holiness, of life and salvation: this is Jesus Christ, who is of God, made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. The true second Adam, very opposite to the first. The first is the source of natural life; he was made a living soul; but, the second Adam, is the cause and principle of our eternal life, infinitely more excellent than that of nature, for he was made a quickning spirit. If the first hath been the source of our natural life, he hath been also, the source of our death: and what do we derive from his fulness, since his fall, but a fulness of sin and of misery, chagrin, pains, afflictions, maladies, faults upon faults, evils upon evils, and, in fine, death? But, if in Adam all die, even so in Christ, shall all be made alive. It is in him, and by him, we have the remission of sins, adoption, sanctification, consolation, and glory. Of his ful-
ness,

ness, have all we received, and grace for grace.

SUPERVILLE.

P. 177, at the bottom. *White's Sermons at Oxford.*] In the *Notes* subjoined to these celebrated discourses, the learned author of them, hath said many things of miracles which are worth notice. The following extracts are from those Notes.

“ Further Observations on Miracles.”

“ In judging of miracles, there are certain *criteria* peculiar to the subject, sufficient to conduct our enquiries, and warrant our determination. Assuredly they do not appeal to our ignorance, for they presuppose, not only the existence of a general order of things, but our actual knowledge of the appearance that order exhibits, and of the secondary material causes from which it, in most cases, proceeds. If a miraculous event were effected by the immediate hand of God, and yet bore no mark of distinction from the ordinary ef-

F f

fects

fects of his agency, it would impress no conviction, and probably awaken no attention.

“ Our knowledge of the ordinary course of things, though limited, is real, and therefore, it is essential to a miracle, both that it differ from that course, and be accompanied with peculiar and unequivocal signs of such difference.

“ But as the term nature is frequently used, and sometimes abused, in the controversy upon this subject, I beg leave to state, in a few words, my own ideas. The course of nature is, we are told, fixed and unalterable, and therefore it is not consistent with the immutability of God to perform miracles. But surely, they who reason in this manner, beg the point in question. We have no right to assume, that the Deity has ordained such general laws as will exclude his interposition, and we cannot suppose that he would forbear to interfere, where any important end could be answered. This interposition, though it controuls, in particular cases, the energy, does
not

not diminish the utility of those laws. It leaves them to fulfil their own proper purposes, and only effects a distinct purpose for which they were not calculated.”—

“ He that arraigns the necessity of an extraordinary providence, may in the end, question even the existence of an ordinary one : for when the genius of wild and undistinguishing enquiry is once let loose on ground where there are no direct paths, and no settled limits, who can tell whither the extravagant and impetuous spirit may be carried ?

“ God is the best, and indeed the only judge, how far miracles are proper to promote any particular design of his providence : and how far that design would have been left unaccomplished, if common and ordinary methods only had been pursued. So from the absence of miracles we may conclude, in any supposed case, that they were not necessary ; from their existence, supported by

fair testimony, in any given case, we may infer with confidence that they are proper."

P. 183, l. 10. *Such, I think, were their sentiments.*] See FLEETWOOD on Miracles.

P. 187, l. 9. *We may add the following presumptions in favour of the Miracles of Jesus Christ.*] See TRAITE de la VERITE de la RELIGION CHRETIENNE, Tiré principalement du Latin de MR. J. ALPH. TURRETIN, par J. VERNET, P. & P. à Geneve.

P. 192, l. 8, after *them*, add *to*.

P. 195, l. 21. *The miracles of Christ were illustrious.*] The benevolence which he displayed for others, in his miraculous operations, adds a peculiar *lustre* to his mightiest works; especially when this is contrasted with that neglect of himself which was so conspicuous in every miracle which he performed.

"When the liquor failed to others, Jesus Christ changed the water into wine; but
when

when he himself thirsted, he said to a woman of Samaria, Give me to drink. When others hungered, he multiplied bread, and satisfied thousands in distress; but when he himself hungered, and approached a barren fig-tree, he performed no miracle to make it supply his want of food. He also endured the fatigue of painful journies, though he had power to make ministering spirits transport him from one place to another, as Philip was taken from the eunuch. In a word, he never availed himself of miracles for his consolation. As he came into the world for others, all his miracles were performed for them. This was a part of his humility, that using his miraculous power for the comfort of others, he forbore to make use of that power for his own relief.

JEAN DESPAGNE.

P. 197, l. 20, for *Christ*, read *Jesus*.

P. 218, l. 5, dele *at.*

P. 232, l. 22. *Interested tutors, parental ambition*
F f 3

ambition, and the vain desires of pupils, have long since concurred to make that necessary which seldom is of any use.] I am persuaded that the greatest part of the sermons which are made and printed, are not sufficiently simple. I deplore the disaster of the age, which often constrains preachers to lose much of their time in polishing their discourses, because their auditors would rather hear them pronounce fine declamations, eloquent harangues, or metaphysical, and abstracted thoughts, (which they admire without understanding) than hear them preach the word of God. In the beginning it was not so. They only then proposed to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and our fathers produced more fruit by their simplicity, than we have done by discourses burdened with erudition. It is much to be desired that we come back again to this good taste, and demonstrate to our people, that we are ministers of Jesus Christ; that it is his word that we preach, which wants not those vain ornaments to produce that effect which God intends to accomplish
by

by the ministry of it. What would the Apostles say, were they to come into the world, and to hear so many things said in sermons which are not of any use to edification? What would our Reformers say, if they saw how far their successors had receded from their method of preaching? God give me grace to the end of my life, to bring souls to Jesus Christ, that I may both save myself and them that hear me.

PICTET.

P. 241, l. 3, for *sufficientt o*, read *sufficient to*.

P. 244, l. 12, for *refers*, read *refer*.

P. 259, l. 1, for *and*, read *or*.

P. 263, l. 3. *If we cordially believe the gospel, we shall endeavour to obey it.*] The common people hold, that all religion consists in practice, or in works; that all Christianity rests on the doctrine of good works; or that at least, the doctrine of manners, (or morality) is the principal part, even the foundation of religion. These maxims are very

F f 4

plausible.

plausible. Upon which, they represent faith, knowledge and prophecy, as unprofitable qualities without charity. The greatest ideots are the greatest orators on this subject, and declaim excellently on good works; which, in truth, they cannot too much recommend; but it is an error more enormous than they imagine, to suppose that religion is nothing more than a doctrine of manners. The doctrine of religion hath two parts. The first part shews what God hath done for man; the other teaches what man should do to God. The first part, is the true and principal character which distinguishes the Christian religion from all others; for there is no false religion which does not teach many fine lessons of morality. But to teach what God hath done for us, in the work of redemption, is a doctrine only to be found in the Christian religion. The true essence of Christianity rests on the first part; for all other religions teach salvation by the works of men towards God; but this shews, that salvation is the work of God towards men.

The

The greatest corruption which is come into the Church, commenced by those maxims which recommended the doctrine of manners, or morality, as being the *whole* substance of religion. For it has happened, that at last, Christianity is reduced to mere good behaviour. If we remark the consequence of many opinions, lately introduced, they terminate in this point.

It is impiety to affirm, that the doctrine of works is the foundation of religion. For salvation, which is the true subject of religion, is founded on that good which God hath done for us, not on the good works which *we* perform to him. From whence it follows, that the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, is not the doctrine of morality. On the contrary, that part which we call moral, is built upon the first part; or on that good which God hath done for us. It is then a very rash assertion to maintain, that the doctrine which treats of manners, or morality, is the most excellent part of religion. All the Christian virtues are the effects of sanctification,

tion, which is the work of God. Without this first part, all our morality would be obscure, and paganish. It is therefore a great error to believe, that to be a good Christian, it is sufficient to be a good moralist.

JEAN DESPAGNE.

P. 267, l. 1, after *from*, add *and under*.

P. 271, l. 16, for *poephecy*, read *prophecy*.

P. 279, l. 15, for *disproved*, read *disapproved*.

P. 288, l. 11, after *our*, add *last*.

P. 292, l. 8. *Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*] Peter remembered the word of Jesus. Beside the crowing of the cock, He had regard to him : for, till then, he was unaffected with that warning voice. It was necessary that Christ should look upon Peter to bring him to himself. Each of us experience as much in ourselves in our different situations. For, who among us hath not had deaf ears ? Who among us hath not neglected, I will not say the crowing of cocks, but the voice of God ? This stupidity, brutal as it is, remains with us, not for a day only,
but

but till he who alone converts the hearts of men, is graciously pleased to have compassion upon us.

CALVIN.

P. 324, l. 1.] *In short, they suffered as real Christians.*] There is nothing more common in the mouths of some afflicted persons, or of those who attempt to comfort them, than to say, that they bear their cross, that their cross is heavy, and that we are subject to many crosses in this world. But, according to the word of God, there are no afflictions which we should consider as our *cross*, except those we are compelled to suffer from our fellow men in the cause of Christianity. It is to such sufferings that God hath reserved, and appropriated, this honourable title. Thus the persecutions which have arisen in the cause of Christ, the torments, proscriptions, losses, calumnies, and all that Christians endure in that quarrel, are honoured with the name of the *Cross*; because of the communion which they have with the sufferings of Christ, and particularly, his death.

death. The afflictions which proceed from other causes, have no part in an epithet so glorious. Nevertheless, a man who is chastised, or even punished for his sins, or who, by his folly, or by his intemperance, shall draw down some disaster on himself, is ready to say, It is a *cross* which it pleased God to send him. This is an abuse of the word. Such afflictions, nor even those which proceed from hidden causes, as that of the man who was born blind, cannot be called a cross. Yet this impropriety is not only the language of common people, but also of many divines; even in their books. They have also said in their writings, that a wicked man, in like manner, hath his cross. Great inadvertence! For, the afflictions of an evil man are not worthy of that name. If even he is an enemy of the doctrine of the cross, and is punished for his faults, shall we say his punishment is a *cross*? or may we say this of a malefactor who suffers for his crimes? All the afflictions, even of a good Christian, cannot be called his *cross*.

JEAN DESPAGNE.

P. 343.

P. 343, l. 22, after *state*, add *have*.

P. 348, l. 4. *Were rather calculated to gratify evil tempers, &c.*] The vulgar think they understand much, when instead of the mysteries of faith, they cry, He speaks to conscience, preaches good works, and censures vice. These persons annihilate the first, and better part of Christianity. It is an error in them to imagine, that a good life consists in nothing more than good works; as if, in order to live well, sound belief was not of any importance. It is an error to say, that the hearing of any mysterious point in religion, is of no use to make us better men. Just as the Jews, when they speak of the gospel, What avails it, say they, in order to be good men, to know that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate; that he was crucified, dead, and buried? It is an error to believe, that the virtues should be taught only by a proper description of them, and by precepts, according to the manner of moralists. For this is to plant the tree at the end of the branches, instead of planting it's root,

Consider

Consider the motives which God sets before us, when he preaches to us good works. The scripture invites us to the practice of virtue, and to the hatred of sin, because we, as Christians, have been baptized into the death of Jesus, and buried with him; because that Christ, as our passover, hath been sacrificed for us; because he is risen from the dead, and that death hath no more dominion over him. What are these arguments? To carry us to good works, the scripture invites us to practise them by the articles of faith. It does more. For it invites us to be obedient by reasons which seem to prompt us to transgress. To say, we are not under the law, but under grace; that God hath appointed us to obtain salvation; are these subjects likely to make us afraid of sin, and willing to turn from it? Doth not such sentiments, if believed, seem more likely (as some have falsely imagined is the fact,) to introduce licentiousness than the fear of sin? But, let the ignorant judge as they please, that the mysteries by which faith is planted and watered, are unprofitable, this faith is the root of our virtue;

virtue ; by it our hearts are purified, and without it, 'tis impossible to produce good fruit.

JEAN DESPAGNE.

P. 350, l. 23, for *the*, read *our*.

P. 355, l. 5. *No man is exempt from the evil of sin.*] As it is written, There is none righteous ; no, not one. The Apostle strikes, by these words, as by a thunder-bolt, not some particular persons, but all the race of Adam. He does not pretend to declaim against the corrupt manners of some corrupt ages, but he accuses generally, the perpetual corruption of our nature. In truth, all the crimes which the Apostle enumerates in this place, (Rom. iii. 10—18.) do not appear in each individual ; but none of them can deny that the seeds of these evils are shed in his mind, and that he nourishes secretly, in his bosom, a body of sin ; an *hydra*, a monster, with many members, and many heads.

CALVIN.

P. 361.

P. 361, l. 19. *Our Lord, as an advocate, pleads the cause of penitent sinners, to procure their just and compleat discharge.]* There are two sorts of advocates. The one, pleading advocates, who plead before the judges, and endeavour to persuade them by the force of their reasons, and discourse. The other are advocates who are consulted for their advice, who instruct their clients, give them counsel, direct them, resolve their doubts, remove their ignorance, and teach them how to conduct their affairs. JESUS is properly a *paraclete*; an advocate of the first order; he is the advocate that pleads for us before the sovereign judge, who makes use of the invincible argument of his death, making the voice of his blood to be heard, which speaketh better things than that of Abel's, and obtains for us, absolution and grace. But the HOLY SPIRIT is our advocate in reference to advice; he counsels, instructs, consoles, gives us courage and assurance, in our approaches to God, liberty of speech, and the dispositions necessary to be heard. How happy are we to have two such admirable advocates,

advocates, of which, the one pleads for us in heaven, and the other teaches us how to form our requests on earth.

Du Bosc.

P. 372, l. 21. *The defects of the Jewish dispensation are strongly stated in this epistle.*]

Under the law, it was a maxim, that every thing which bore the quality of *most-holy*, was to be excluded from the people; who, in these things, had not communion with the priests. The New Testament has removed this difference. All true Christians are *now* priests; all have a right to eat of that which is *most holy*, and which hath a virtue to sanctify us (through faith;) namely, the expiatory sacrifice, which is the body of Christ. Thus the communion of saints is *now* more complete, and more universal, than it was under the law.

JEAN DESPAGNE.

P. 383, l. 5. *And therefore, cannot offer himself a second time.*]

This is well argued by MESTREZAT, whose sermon, on the

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words

words of my text, is worth the reader's notice.

P. 387, l. 19, for *eq ly*, read *equally*.

P. 393, l. 20, instead of the mark of interrogation, place a period.

P. 394, l. 17, for *public*, read *publish*.

P. 406, l. 16. *Here, I am obliged to quit the learned bishop, whom I have more than once mentioned with respect.*] But it would be wrong to imagine this is the only point in which I differ from him. In my opinion, this great man hath missed his way frequently, both on civil, and on religious subjects. Yet still, he must be considered as a *great man*. They who are disposed to contradict it, have either not read his learned works, or read them under the influence of that jealousy which is cruel as the grave.

P. 408, l. 3. *A long list of able advocates have sufficiently shewn.*] A good abridgment of their arguments may be seen in Picator's *Loci communes Theologici*, p. 61, 62, 63, 64. *Editio Octava*, HERBORNÆ, 1615.

P. 416,

P. 416, l. 8, for *was*, read *is*.

P. 416, l. 15. *The fair inference is, that Christ is the sum of the law.*] The intention of Moses hath been nothing else than to call men by the law to Jesus Christ. From which it appears, that those who reject Christ, are not the disciples of Moses. How should any man understand the doctrine of the law, who does all he can to extinguish its spirit? For the law without Christ is deficient, and hath nothing which is firm. So much then, as any person hath known Christ, so much hath he profited in the word of God. But if this is granted, it follows, we must read the scriptures with an intention to find Christ. Whoever turns from this end, though he torments himself all his life to learn, shall never come to the knowledge of the truth.

CALVIN.

P. 419, l. 8. *These words, in my opinion, shew us, there is a close connection between the Old Testament and the New.*] Behold that which we should search for in *all the scripture*; it is to know Jesus Christ, and the infinite

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riches,

riches which are shut up in him. When we examine thoroughly, the law and the prophets, we there find not so much as one word, which does not conduct, and bring us to that object. It is then, with reason, that Saint Paul said to the Corinthians, I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. For though it seems to be the opinion of carnal persons, that this knowledge is vulgar and contemptible, nevertheless it is sufficient to occupy us all our lives. Should we employ all our study, and all our understanding to profit therein, it would not be a waste of our time.

CALVIN.

P. 421, l. 14. *Of that grace which should come to us.*] GRACE is a gift sovereignly perfect in the quality of a gift. There are three things to be considered in a gift. He that gives, he to whom it is given, and the manner in which it is bestowed. He that gives, ought to give of his own; for that is to give in sovereign perfection; and he must likewise have it in his power, and be in a capacity,

capacity, to give *all* that he does give : he therefore ought to be sovereignly good to give willingly, and sovereignly powerful to give liberally, and sovereignly independent to give without any hopes of a return : otherwise it is trafficking, and not giving. He to whom the gift is given, ought to merit nothing of him that gives it ; for it would be only justice if he deserved it : he ought to be in extreme necessity, otherwise he might decline and refuse the gift. Lastly, for the manner in which it is given, it ought to be done freely ; for what is given upon force and compulsion, is not given, but wrested from the donor ; but the gift ought to prevent the merit of the receiver, least it be thought a recompense ; and to precede all desire, expectation, and request, because by such application and address, it may seem to be merited. All these qualities meet and unite in GRACE ; and above all, in that first and most important of all *graces*, which is the redemption of man, they all concur and agree to make it a gift sovereignly perfect.—Such is the treatise of *grace* in St. Augustin ; and all
that

that he says, in several other parts of his works, may be reduced to these principles.

RAPIN.

When I read this quotation, and recollect what I have read in the works of St. Augustin, it grieves me, that an ingenious man, of my own denomination, should have treated so illiberally, a bishop who has been applauded by the best of scholars, and by the best of men, for more than thirteen centuries. Were he living, I would try to answer him on this subject, according to his folly. But death has placed him out of the reach of controversy, and given him, I hope, notwithstanding his many mistakes, an entrance into glory.

P. 422, l. 1. *And thus employed and assisted, we shall, I trust, with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation.*] But this employ is strangely procraftinated through the legality of our dispositions, and our fond attachment to the law of works. They who err most in this business, seem to be apprehensive, that
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if the law is not preached more than the gospel, immoralities must every where abound. Yet was there, at any time, greater wickedness than under the legal dispensation?

It is true, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. But then, the law is holy, just, and good, as a *law*. It can be nothing more.

They who believe, and love the gospel of Christ, are under no temptation to depreciate the law. Nor is it depreciated by saying, it is subsequent and subordinate to the gospel; nor by asserting, that it is inferior to it in excellence, and in its vivifying energy on the human mind.

The moral law was originally given to Adam, before he was placed in Paradise, and previous to his being favoured with any *positive* institution. It was given to him in a state of *innocence*, and as the federal head of all mankind. But the gospel, when it was first published, and ever since, was published in the name of Jesus Christ, and sent to individuals

viduals considered as guilty, weak, and miserable men. The law, as such, cannot relieve a sinner; nor can it expressly, inform him where, or how, he may obtain relief. Least of all can the *moral* law shew him this favour. But the gospel relieves none but sinners. They who are not convinced of sin are by it sent empty away. The reward of the *law* is not, nor ever was, *heavenly* felicity. But the reward of grace is glory. It is given to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and to conduct us safely thither. Yet the law is not *against* the promises of God. It requires nothing but what is holy, just, and good; and though it cannot give what it requires, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor doth his wisdom fail him that he should save any man to the reproach of his own laws. To be sure, the promises of God manifest those mercies and duties, which no man can discover in the ten commandments; but against these things, *there is no law.*



